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MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT AND ACTIVITY IN INDIA DURING THE FIRST HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

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BY

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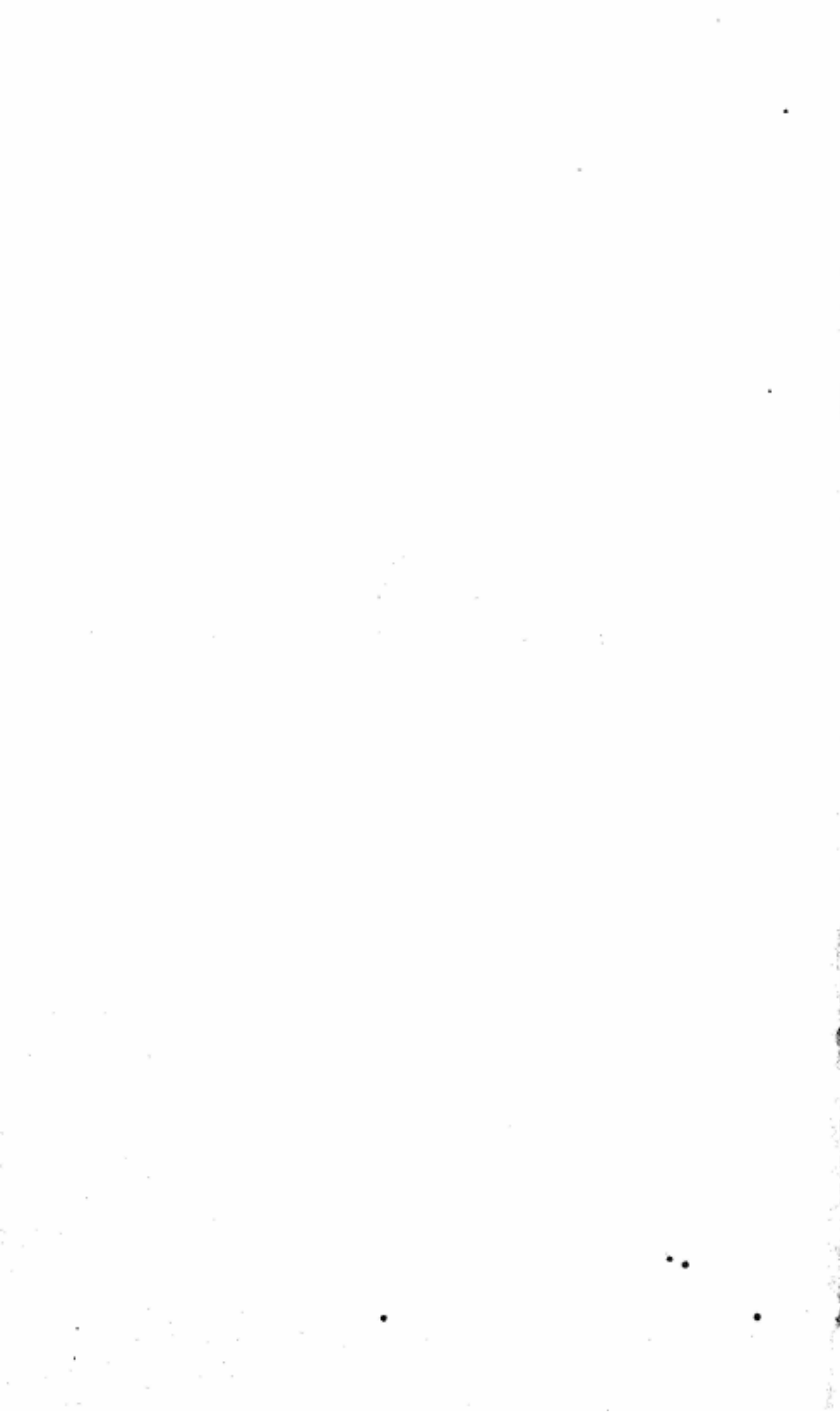
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DEDICATED
TO
THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER
M. AZIZ AHMAD SAHIB NIZAMI, ADVOCATE, MEERUT



PREFACE

The first half of the 19th century constitutes a period of great significance in the history of Muslim political thought and institutions in India. It saw the final extinction of the Mughal Empire on the one hand and the emergence of British power as the supplanter of Muslim rule on the other. This situation was a challenge to Muslim political attitude as it had developed during the preceding centuries.

The present work is an humble attempt at analysing the basic categories of Muslim political thought and its reactions to different situations during this period of unprecedented political stress and strain.

It is my pleasant duty to express my deep sense of gratitude to Professor S. A. H. Haqqi, under whose inspiring guidance the present work has been prepared. But for him this work would not have seen the light of the day. It is beyond words to express my deep sense of gratitude and indebtedness to my revered teacher Professor Emeritus Mohammad Habib who, inspite of his pressing academic engagements went through the entire type-script and made extremely valuable comments for its revision. His encyclopaedic knowledge and unflinching devotion to the cause of truth has always been a source of inspiration to me and to all who know him. I am further beholden to him for his kindness in writing a Foreward. I also wish to thank my teachers Mr. S. Nasir Ali and Dr. A.H. Bilgrami for the help and guidance that I have always received from them. I am also thankful to Mr. Iqtidar Husain Siddiqi and Mr. Anis Ahmad Farooqi for going through the proofs and for making valuable suggestions.

(xiv)

Last but not the least my thanks are due to Mr. Kishan Singh, the Proprietor of the Three Men's Publications and his colleagues for efficiently publishing this work in a very short time.

Muslim University,
Aligarh.
Feb. 10, 1969.

TAUFIQ AHMAD NIZAMI

FOREWORD

Mr. Taufiq Ahmad Nizami is one of the most brilliant and promising students I have had during my forty-six years of service as a teacher at the Aligarh Muslim University. I consider it a great privilege that he has asked me to write the Foreword to his first work, which I consider the prelude of many yet to come.

The present work consists of six studies on "Indo-Muslim Political Thought and activity in the first half of the Nineteenth Century." The two most important features of the period were the Wahhabi movement of Saiyyid Ahmad Shahid of Rae Bareilly and the Faraizi movement of Bengal. Both were extremely puritanic in character.

India has become free but through means never contemplated by the Wahhabis or the Faraizis. Our national movement has succeeded — as Macaulay dimly foresaw in 1832—through the acceptance of all the great achievements of the West in art, literature, science, industry and organisation. It has been secular in character — secular in the sense that it has left the innumerable 'theologies' of the country absolutely untouched, to fade or prosper according to their human values. The Wahhabi and the Faraizi movements, seeking for India's freedom through the minority of a minority on the basis of religious and social ideas based on theological texts, which were quite inapplicable to Indian circumstances of the pre-Mutiny era, were blind allies which could not lead to success. But a people has to try many experiments before it can discover the correct path. Also we cannot withhold our admiration from the devotion, courage, self-sacrifice and other social virtues evoked by the two movements in their contest with a ruthless foreign power.

Since Puritanism and its opposite, Mysticism (*Tasawwuf*) are found in almost all religions, I would like to clarify their position so far as Islam is concerned.

Though the Quran has plenty of Jewish, Christian, Hellenic and Hellenistic ideas, the Prophet of Islam never stepped on a non-Arab territory; the word *Fatiha* in the Quran does not mean 'conquering' a territory but 'winning over the hearts of its inhabitants.' The Prophet never contemplated the conquest of foreign lands and left no laws about it. Even within Arabia itself he did not establish a state or government with its usual paraphernalia of a permanent civil service, judges, army, police, treasury and similar institutions, but contented himself with a series of treaties with various clans and tribes for the maintenance of peace. These treaties, collected some two centuries after the Prophet's death, are preserved for us in the *Tabaqat-i Ibn-i Sa'd*, which the late Maulana Shibli considered to be thoroughly reliable. The Pious Caliphate (*Khilafat-i-Rashida*, 633-663), to which Sunni Muslims have shown such remarkable devotion throughout ages was not based on any injunction of the Quran or precept (*hadis*) of the Prophet but on the 'consensus of the community' (*ijma-i ummat*) after the Prophet's death.

In 622 A.D. the Prophet found a centre for Islam in Medina; he had started preaching his religion in Mecca some thirteen years earlier. When he died in 633, he had not (according to Sunni Muslims) appointed any successor. But immediately after his death the people of Medina held a meeting to elect one of themselves to succeed him. But three Meccans, technically *muhajirins* or emigres, Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu Obaidah Jarrah came to the meeting uninvited, and told the people of Medina in no uncertain terms that none except a Quraish from Mecca had a chance of being accepted by the whole of Arabia. So after a tumultuous meeting Abu Bakr was elected as the first caliph of Islam. Many tribes revolted none-the-less and in order to subdue them

Abu Bakr had to organise a highly centralised state controlling about eleven armies. In the century that followed —i.e. by the time of Walid bin Abdul Malik's death in 715 A.D.— the frontiers of the *Caliphal empire* had reached the limits where, with some exceptions, we find the frontiers of *Muslim population* today. They stretch in a broad band from the Atlantic Ocean to the frontiers of China.

At the time of Hazrat Ali's death and Mu'awiya's accession to the caliphate in 661 A.D., Islam was only four decades old. But mankind had been living and struggling, not without success, for about a million years. The Egyptians had built their Pyramids; the Chinese had constructed their Great Wall; the Greeks, with slave-owning city democracies, had laid the foundations of science, art and culture: while the oligarchy of Rome had shown how a great empire could be founded and governed. Great books, both secular and spiritual, which continue to inspire mankind today had been composed in various languages of the world.

By 661 A.D. many leading Musalmans had migrated from the unproductive regions of central Arabia to Palestine, Syria, Egypt and Iraq, where life could be more spacious. The question naturally arose — What would be the attitude of the Muslims to 'the secular civilisation', which had been developing in these countries for some five thousand years? The attitude of the mass of the Muslim intelligentsia was clear. It would discard from the old civilisations what was bad or of no value—the slave-owning democracy, for example. But it would appropriate and develop what was of value in the civilisations of the past from the land revenue system to architecture. In the spiritual sphere this meant that the spiritual content of all systems of thought from Greek Hellenism to Buddhism and Hinduism would be subjected to a critical examination, and elements of proved worth would be accepted. This is the essence of Muslim mysticism and the basis of its tolerance.

But another alternative was also possible, though

practice would prove it to be futile. An attempt could be made to put the whole world where central Arabia (*Arabic Felix*) was about the year 632 A.D. and hold the hands of the Time Clock so firmly that they moved no further. Mr. Taufiq Nizami considers Ibn-i Taimiyya to be the founder of Puritanism, including in that term all movements of the Wahhabi type. I think we can go further and find the founder of Muslim Puritanism in Hazrat Abu Zar Ghiffari, a highly respected companion of the Prophet himself, who condemned the whole process by which the standard of living was being raised and elements of foreign culture were being absorbed. Ghiffari did not approve of the policy of the third Pious Caliph, Usman, died in a hut he had constructed for himself in the desert, was buried by some passing travellers.

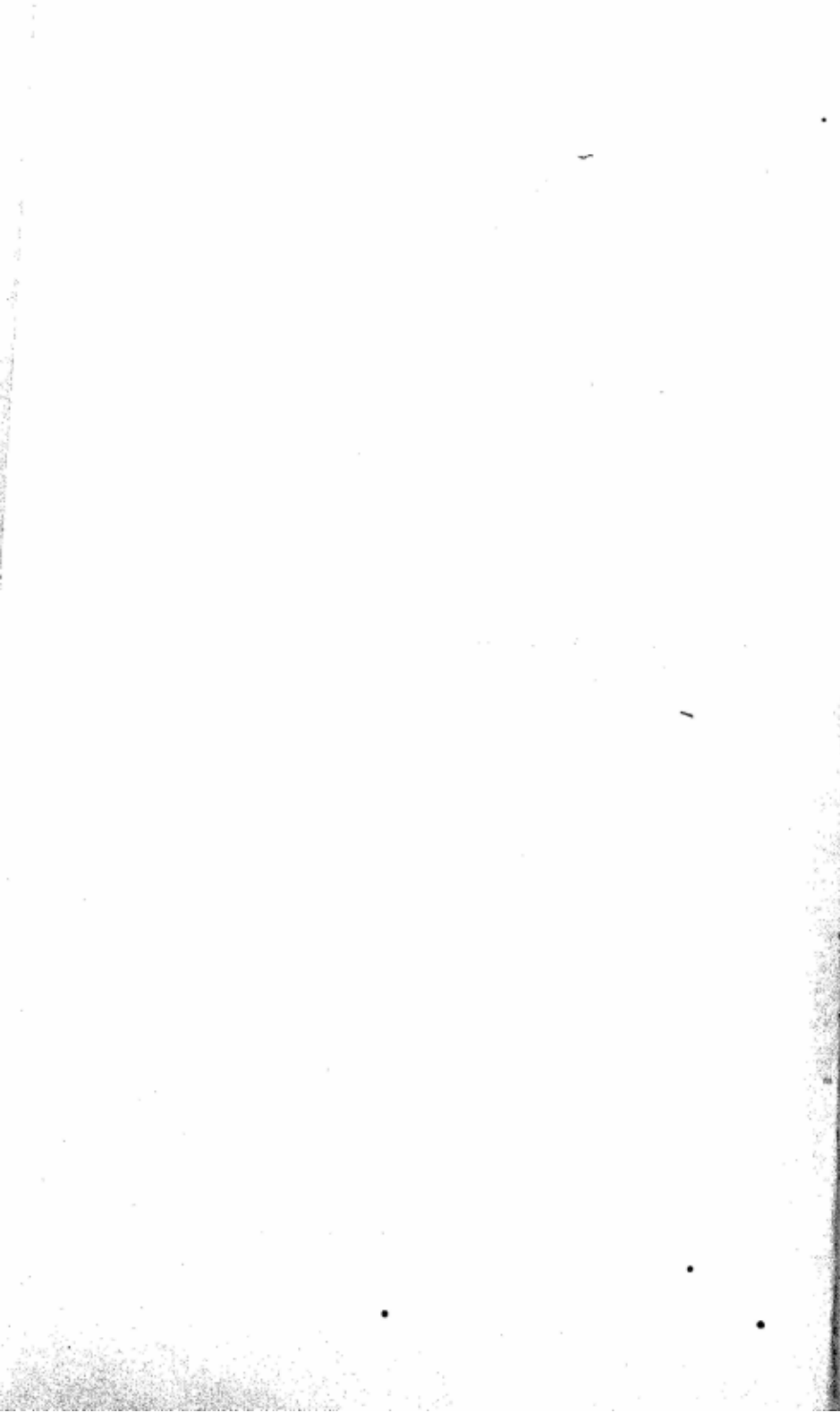
Puritanism in Islam (by whatever name it is called) consists in the love of two processes. It loves the process by which the Prophet dragged his followers from polytheism to monotheism; it also loves the *jihad* by the Prophet and the first two Pious Caliphs against non-Muslims. Now the tragedy of Muslim Puritanism consists in the fact that these two processes have attained their object completely and their revival is simply impossible. The Prophet has definitely driven out all elements of polytheism from the Muslim mind; fighting polytheism in the Muslim mind is just a species of meaningless witch-hunting. Similarly Islam as a world power was put on the world map by the second Caliph, Umar; its future in the centuries that have followed has depended not on the fighting capacity of its followers but on the spiritual contents of its thinkers. "A modern war", says Engels, "is a function of industry". This is true today, it was also true in the time of Abdul Wahhab and Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, though they were unfortunately not aware of it. With their very meagre resources they challenged the greatest capitalistic power of the world with its enormous resources of coal, iron, shipping and scientific technique in "a military struggle that could only have one result

Still the Mujahidin and Faraizi movements are of great value owing to the moral courage of their leaders and their preparedness to face all consequences. Their significance in the history of our country lies in the fact that the same courage and character have, under happier circumstances, led to success.

Mr. Taufiq Ahmad Nizami has prepared an excellent book on the subject based on original research. I am sure the reader will find the book both interesting and instructive.

Badar Bagh,
Aligarh Muslim University,
ALIGARH.

Mohammad Habib



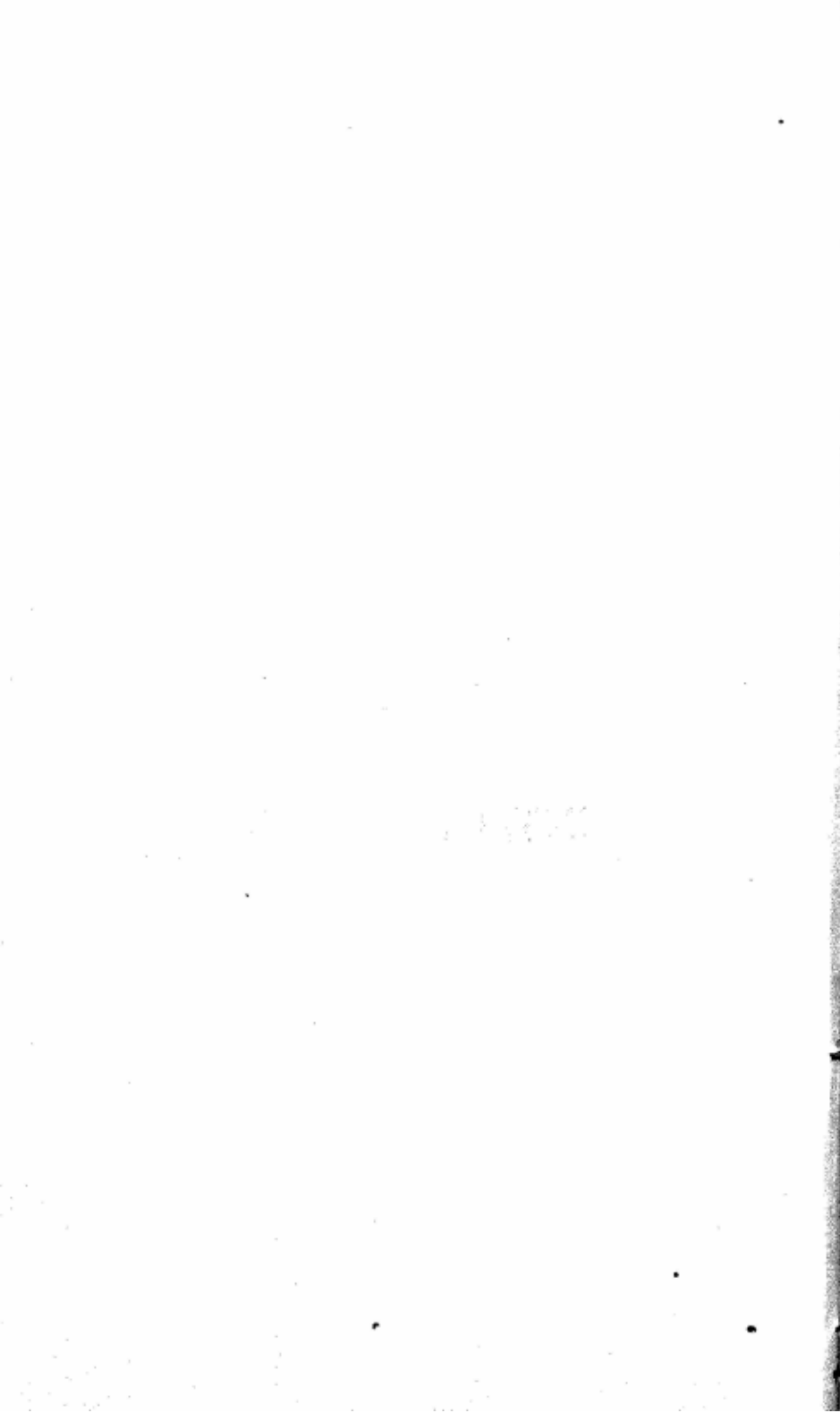
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY





CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

The early decades of the 19th century constitute a water-shed in the history of Indo-Muslim political thought. The decline of Muslim political power which had begun in the early 18th century reached its lowest point during this period and the tentacles of British imperialism spread far and wide into the country. The Red Fort which had once been the Versailles of India was reduced to such a condition that according to Bishop Heber who visited it in the early 19th century, "The *Shah-Burj* was dirty, lonely, and wretched; the bath and fountain dry; the inlaid pavement hid with lumber and gardener's sweeping, and the walls stained with the dung of birds and bats.¹"

The entire political structure of northern India crumbled during this period. The Mughal Emperors became not only pensioners but prisoners in the hands of the East India Company which soon passed from dividends to dominion, with a real government, pursuing an ambitious policy of annexation. Finding a trading company turning into the controller of Indian's destinies, Shah Abdul Aziz, son of the famous Muslim scholar and divine of Delhi, Shah Wali Ullah, declared that India had become *Dar-ul-Harb*. It was a political verdict couched in religious terminology. It became the focal point of Muslim Political thought in the decades that followed and, in fact, Muslim activity in the political sphere drew inspiration from this *fatwa* and centred round it. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Maulana Ismail Shahid really tried to translate into practice the decision of Shah Abdul Aziz. They travelled throughout northern India, from Balakot to

1. *Narrative of Journey through the Upper Provinces of India*, Vol. I, pp. 306-307.

Calcutta and recruited supporters almost in every important town and city that they happened to visit. Hunter says that as the result of their propaganda there appeared secret organizations throughout the whole of Northern India. The tragedy of Balakot (1831) was a turning point in the history of Muslim political thought and activity. It brought to light a hard fact that without efficient military organization it was utterly impossible to achieve anything and that mere religious zeal could lead nowhere. However, the zeal that Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and his other colleagues had inspired amongst the people continued to agitate the religio-political thought of the Muslims. According to Sir Sayyid, volunteers used to visit Balakot for at least two decades after the tragedy just to show their profound admiration for and attachment to the fallen leader. Some of them began to believe credulously that the leader had simply concealed¹ himself to reappear at the opportune moment. This superstitious aspect apart, it is a fact that the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid did not die with him. It continued to express itself in different forms at different places. Suppressed in the north-western frontier region, it made its appearance in the eastern provinces in the shape of the Fara'izi movement. For many years the British merchants of Bengal found themselves in a very difficult position due to the activities of the Fara'izis.

The so-called mutiny of 1857 was, in fact, preceded by several attempts to dislodge the British from the position they had slowly but surely gained in the economic and political life of the country. In the succeeding chapters an attempt is made to trace the genesis, nature of activity and impact of these movements. But, before taking up a discussion of these movements and their ideological significance, it seems necessary to have a glance at the political map of India in the beginning of the 19th century and assess the nature and position of various powers, struggling for supremacy.

1. *Asar us Sanadid* (1st edition), pp. 43-47.

(a) *The Mughal Empire and the Mughal Emperor :*

When Aurangzeb closed his aged eyes in death (1707) the Mughal Empire had already entered a critical phase of its life. Years of continuous warfare in the Deccan had completely ruined the prosperity of the country. There was agrarian distress; economic ruin and political chaos in the North as well as in the South. The central government found itself helpless to check the recalcitrant elements. The Jats, the Marathas and the Sikhs started their offensive attacks against the Mughal government and their activities struck awe and terror into the hearts of the people, both Hindus and Muslims. Harcharan Das gives the picture of the inhabitants of Delhi at the time of Jat attacks in these words : "The inhabitants of Delhi roamed from house to house, lane to lane, in despair and bewilderment, like a wrecked ship tossing on the waves; every one was running about like a lunatic, distracted, puzzled and unable to take care of himself."¹

The activities of the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats and the Rohillas—every one of whom was anxious to establish its power in the country and yet did not possess the requisite ability to run an all-India administration—reduced the Mughal Empire to a mere shadow. Its prestige suffered at every blow that was dealt on Delhi by these powers. Taking advantage of the weakness of the centre, provincial governors set up independent principalities in Awadh, Bengal and the Deccan. The Mughal Empire shrank to only a few districts around Delhi. With the rise of British power, the Mughal Empire was confined to the Red Fort and the Mughal Emperor to the Saman Burj. In fact the Mughal Emperor "ceased to be a person and became an institution."²

In the first half of the 19th century the last two

1. *Chahar Gulzar-i-Shujai*, Rotograph of the Manuscript (British Museum), London.

2. Ishwari Prasad and Subedar, *A History of Modern India*, Allahabad 1938, p. 135.

Mughal rulers who occupied the throne of Delhi were Akbar Shah II (1806-1838) and Bahadur Shah II (1837-1857).

Akbar Shah II was a very weak and vacillating ruler. He leaned upon the ladies of the harem even in the decision of administrative and political matters. In fact, as Spear says, these women had become "the real directors of his policy."¹

The three ladies who controlled him and guided the destinies of the crumbling empire were—Qudsia Begum, his mother; Mumtaz Mahal, his favourite wife; and Daulat-un-Nisa Begum, his paternal aunt. Even in political discussions and negotiations they took a leading part. "The king himself," wrote Holford, "took little part in conversation, but occasionally explained or confirmed such of their observations as had reference to his own feelings or wishes."² The economic position of the Emperor became so weak that the silver ceiling of the Diwan-i-Khas was removed and sold in the market to meet the growing demands on the royal purse. The copper ceiling of Diwan-i-Am was used for minting coins³. The palace gave the impression of a place surrounded by paupers and penury stricken people. Sir Sayyid says that during this time his maternal grandfather, Khwaja Farid Uddin, was called by Akbar Shah in order to set right the economic affairs of the palace but the vested interests of the royal court made him helpless and he saw no alternative but to resign and retire. At this time the poverty of the *Salatin* (colleterals of the emperor) had reached such a stage that they used to shout from the roofs of their houses : "We are starving! We are starving!"⁴ There were thousands of *Salatin* who were living on pensions in the palace. They were not permitted to go out of the palace in order to earn

1. *Twilight of the Mughuls*, p. 41.

2. *Holford's Memorandum on the Affairs of Delhi*. India Office Home Misc. 336.

3. *Sirat-i-Faridiya*, Sir Sayyid, pp. 25-26.

4. *Sirat-i-Faridiya*, Sir Sayyid, pp. 23-24.

their livelihood. Such a thing was considered derogatory to Mughal prestige.

Akbar Shah wanted to nominate Mirza Jahangir as his successor, but Lord Minto refused to recognize this nomination and forbade the Resident to attend his installation. Lord Minto defined his attitude towards the Mughal ruler as "a complimentary recognition of a nominal sovereignty." But he recommended an increase in the royal stipend in fulfilment of the pledges made earlier by Wellesley. Two years later, the Directors wrote in a despatch :

"We conceive that your power in India is at this day of a character too substantial to require that we should resort to the hazardous expedient of endeavouring to add to its stability by borrowing from the king of Delhi any portion of authority which we are competent to exercise in our own name. True policy prescribes that we should rest satisfied with the degree of respect, submission and attachment which our strength and skill in arms, our wisdom and beneficence in governing may procure for us. Our pre-eminence over the Native states in these qualities is, we trust, sufficiently conspicuous and acknowledged. If therefore it is unnecessary to derive from the king of Delhi any additional title to the Allegiance of our Indian subjects, we cannot be disposed to permit any attempts to withdraw their obedience from their supervisors, and to convert this nominal into a real supremacy. The course which appears to us the most proper to be pursued, and which has in fact been hitherto been pursued with respect to His Majesty the king of Delhi, is to leave his authority in the state in which we found it, and to afford the Royal Family the means of subsistence, not merely in a state of comfort but of decent splendour not unsuitable to the descendants of a fallen but illustrious House, to whose power we have in a great measure succeeded."¹

This despatch shows that the Company's policy was to raise the material condition of the Emperor but to depress his sovereign status; but what was actually done is that his position was reduced without any material facilities being provided.

to him. Akbar Shah decided to send Raja Ram Mohan Roy as his envoy to London and represent his case to the British government. The Raja made a very able presentation of the case but nothing came out of the trouble he took in advocating an almost 'lost case'.

Bahadur Shah II who succeeded Akbar Shah in 1837 had to face an even more impossible situation. Lord Ellenborough abolished the practice of *nazar*, because "he deemed that the offer of this inferior token of feudal submission is inconsistent with the relative position of the King of Delhi." Bahadur Shah remonstrated but he did not get back his *nazars*. "The episode of the *nazars*," remarks Spear, "is the outstanding example of the changed attitude towards the Mughal family. For what was abolished with the agent's *nazars* was not a recognition of the king's claims as the ruler of India, but the recognition of his status as king."¹

Bahadur Shah, a prince of literary tastes, had created round him a circle of poets, scholars, divines, etc., but it was difficult for him to control the political trends and tendencies of the period. There was corruption and intrigue at the court. Thousands of idle *salatin* roamed about and created nuisance. Sir Sayyid Ahmad gives a very grotesque picture of Bahadur Shah in the following words :

"The ex-king had a fixed idea that he could transform himself into fly or gnat, and that he could in this guise convey himself to other countries and learn what was going on there. Seriously, he firmly believed that he possessed the power of transformation."²

This may be a rather harsh assesment of Bahadur Shah's character but it goes without saying that the atmosphere at his court was one of indolence, lethargy, corruption, intrigue, betrayal and treachery. But one thing can hardly be denied. Though the Mughal emperor was nothing more than the phantom of a forgotten glory, yet in the political conscious-

1. *Twilight of the Mughals*, pp. 57-58

2. *Asbab-i-Baghawat-i-Hind*, p. 32.

ness of the people he was a symbol of India's political unity. The fact that when the Indians rose against the British in 1857, all those powers, even the Marathas, Jats & others, who had been hostile to Mughal power for centuries, gathered round Bahadur Shah, shows that they looked upon the Mughal Emperor as a symbol of India's political individuality.

(b) *The Sikh Power in the Punjab :*

The political instability and chaos in northern India which came in the wake of the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali, helped the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab. In the 19th century the Sikh presence in the Punjab influenced considerably the political thought and activity of the Muslims.

Ranjit Singh who was endowed with an iron will and a "selfish, treacherous, crafty, persevering, brave and avaricious" spirit, began his career as a soldier but soon became the ruler of the Punjab and made Lahore his capital in 1799. The British also at this time were anxious for an alliance with the Maharaja on account of the fear of a French invasion through Persia, Afghanistan and the Punjab. Charles Metcalfe was sent to the court of Ranjit Singh to negotiate terms of treaty by which the cis-Sutlej states would be relieved and the British would secure the alliance of Ranjit Singh. The British envoy waited upon him at Qasur, but the negotiations failed. Subsequently David Ochterlony marched with a strong British army to the Sutlej and took up his position at Ludhiana. Ranjit Singh demanded that he should withdraw the British troops to Karnal. The attitude of the British had changed on receiving news that Napoleon had given up his idea of invading India. On the 9th of February Ochterlony issued a proclamation that the cis-Sutlej States had been taken under British protection and aggression on the part of Ranjit Singh would be firmly resisted. This produced the desired effect and Ranjit Singh agreed to the Treaty of Amritsar on April 25, 1809. The British Government

left Ranjit Singh master of the country north of the Sutlej, and got a promise that he would not maintain troops to the South of that river more than what was necessary for ordinary administrative purposes and that he would not encroach upon the territories of other cis-Sutlej states.

The Maharaja consolidated his power in the areas where his position was guaranteed by the British. The affairs in Afghanistan being in confusion at that time, Ranjit Singh thought of expansion towards the West. When Shah Shuja was exiled from Afghanistan and he came over to India, Ranjit Singh opened negotiations with him and promised his help in recovering Multan and Kashmir. Under pressure Ranjit Singh obtained the Koh-i-Nur diamond from him and never kept the promises he had made.

In 1819 Ranjit Singh established his hold over Kashmir also and obtained possession of Dera Ghazi Khan and Dera Ismail Khan on the banks of the river Indus. In 1822 he demanded tribute from the governor of Peshawar, who offered some horses as a mark of submission. In 1823 Ranjit Singh defeated the Afghans at Nawshera. The occupation of the frontier was stoutly opposed by the Muslims, but Ranjit Singh succeeded in establishing his power and became master of the vast territory from the Khyber to the Sutlej and from Kashmir to Multan. This situation found reaction in the resistance movement organized by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid whose ideology and activities will be discussed later on.

Ranjit Singh's chief political objective was to organize a Sikh State¹ over the entire region extending to the mouth of the Indus by crushing a number of Muslim states. This brought him into conflict with British interests but both proceeded cautiously, avoiding a conflict.

Early in 1831 a deputation from Lahore waited upon Lord William Bentinck at Simla. Bentinck deputed Captain

1. "The main idea of Sikhism was the destruction of Islam, and it was unlawful to salute Muhammadans, to associate with them, or to make peace with them on any terms." Sir Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh*, Oxford 1898, pp. 113-14.

Wade, the Political Agent at Ludhiana, to arrange an interview between him and Ranjit Singh. The meeting took place at Ropar, on the banks of the Sutlej. It lasted a week and the relations between Maharaja Ranjit Singh and the British became closer. Ranjit Singh offered equal division of Sind but Bentinck did not encourage the idea. In 1843 Sir Charles Napier accomplished, what he himself described as "a very advantageous, useful, humane piece of rascality" and annexed the whole of Sind.

However, during a short period Sikh rule distinguished itself as a strong power to be reckoned with. It became difficult for the Muslims to directly challenge its authority, and resistance required a strong, organised and well-planned movement. The plight of the Muslims under the Sikh rule was extremely miserable. They not only lived a most disgraceful life but were subjected to all sorts of cruel treatment and tortures.

The following statement issued for *Jihad* against the Sikhs throws light on the condition of the Muslims of the Punjab :

"The Sikh nation have long held sway in Lahore and other places. Their oppressions have exceeded all bounds. Thousands of Muhammadans have they unjustly killed, and on thousands they have heaped disgrace. No longer do they allow the call to prayer from the Mosques, and the killing of cows they have entirely prohibited. When at last their insulting tyranny could no more be endured, Hazrat Sayyid Ahmad (may his fortunes and blessings ever abide) having for his single object the protection of the Faith, took with him a few Musalmans, and, going in the direction of Kabul and Peshawar, succeeded in rousing Muhammadans from their slumber of indifference, and nerving their courage for action. Praise be to God, some thousands of believers became ready at his call to tread the path of God's service, and on the 21st December, 1826, the *jihad* against the infidel Sikhs begins."¹

This statement which reflects the state of affairs at this time

I, Taken from a tract published in the Province of Oudh,

and the gravity of the situation, was carried throughout northern India. When the Muslim struggle against the Sikhs began under the leadership of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, the British government decided to simply watch the event; and maintain an attitude of strict neutrality. Sir Sayyid informs us : "Thousands of Muhammadans armed with weapons and a large store of war materials were collected for *jihad* against the Sikhs. The Commissioner and the Magistrate, who were informed of it, brought it to the notice of the Government but the Government clearly wrote to them not to interfere."¹ In fact they thought that whichever side was defeated the victory was of the British.

(c) *The British Power :*

It will not be proper to trace here the stages of evolution leading to the establishment of British power in India. The East India Company started as a Commercial company and in course of time transformed itself into a ruling power. Edmund Burke very correctly remarked : "East India Company did not seem to be merely a Company formed for the extension of the British Commerce, but in reality a delegation of the whole power and sovereignty of this Kingdom sent into the East."²

While the credit for the establishment of British supremacy goes to Marquiss of Wallesley³, the credit for the idea of establishing territorial Empire in India goes to Dupleix. "It is customary with the English in this country to proceed very carefully. They work with far sightedness and caution. They are always careful that a wrong step might interfere with their administrative responsibility and create chaos in the country. Consequently whenever they sense any danger in the northern part of the country, they send their armies in that direction and establish their garrisons there so that if

1. *Institute Gazette*, dated September 8, 1871.

2. Edmund Burke, Speeches in the trial of Warren Hastings, as quoted in *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. V, p. 182.

3. He was appointed Governor General in 1798,

any enemy raises his head against them, he may be suppressed forthwith. Wherever they discover any weakness, they immediately attend to it. This is the great quality of Englishmen that they do their job at the appropriate time.¹⁷

Within a period of hundred years from the Battle of Plassey (June 27, 1757), India was forced to accept the supremacy of the British. They brought about an iconoclastic trend and a socio-economic revolution in the country, destroyed the old institutions and gave birth to new social, political and economic order, or in other words the East India Company imported the first phase of capitalism in India.

With the advent of the British power in India, the political, social, and economic condition of the Musalmans underwent a radical change. Even W. W. Hunter admits in his book the atrocities committed on the Muslims by the British. He says : "There is no use shutting our ears to the fact that the Indian Muhammadans arraign us on a list of charges as serious as was ever brought against a government. They accuse us of having closed every honourable walk of life to professors of their creed. They accuse us of having introduced a system of education which has landed it in contempt and beggary. They accuse us of having brought misery into thousands of families by abolishing their law officers.....Above all, they charge us with deliberate malversation of their religious foundations and with misappropriation on the largest scale of their educational funds." All sorts of employments were closed for the Muslims and the British began to patronize and help the Hindus. Hunter writes : "All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Muhammadans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Muhammadans in its Gazettes for exclusion

from official posts. Recently when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sundarbans Commissioner, that official in advertising them in the Government Gazette, stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short, the Muhammadans have now sunk so low, that even when qualified for Government employment, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notifications. Nobody takes any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence.¹

The Englishmen regarded Muslims as the enemies of Christianity and the Government². Macaulay once revealed that Clive was dead against the Muslims and was not willing to give them any post of responsibility³. The reason, in the eyes of an Englishman was : "For some reasons or the other they (the Muslims) hold aloof from our system, and the changes in which more flexible Hindus have acquiesced, are regarded, by them as deep personal wrongs."⁴

A Muslim petition which was handed over to the Commissioner of Orissa, reveals the miserable plight of the Muslims of that time. It says : "As loyal subjects of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen we have, we believe, an equal claim to all appointments in the administration of the country. Truly speaking, the Orissa Muhammadans have been levelled down and down, with no hopes of raising again. Born of noble parentage, poor by profession and destitute of patrons, we find ourselves in the position of a fish out of water. Such is the wretched state of the Muhammadans which we bring into your Honour's notice, believing your Honour to be sole representative of Her Most Gracious Majesty the Queen for the Orissa Division, and hoping that justice will be administered to all classes, without distinction

1. *The Indian Musalmans*, II Edition (London) 1872, p. 175.

2. Muhammad Tufayl, p. 160.

3. Lambrick, H. T., *Sir Charles Napier and Sind*, p. 28.

4. W. W. Hunter—*Indian Musalmans*, Second Edition (London) 1872, p. 11.

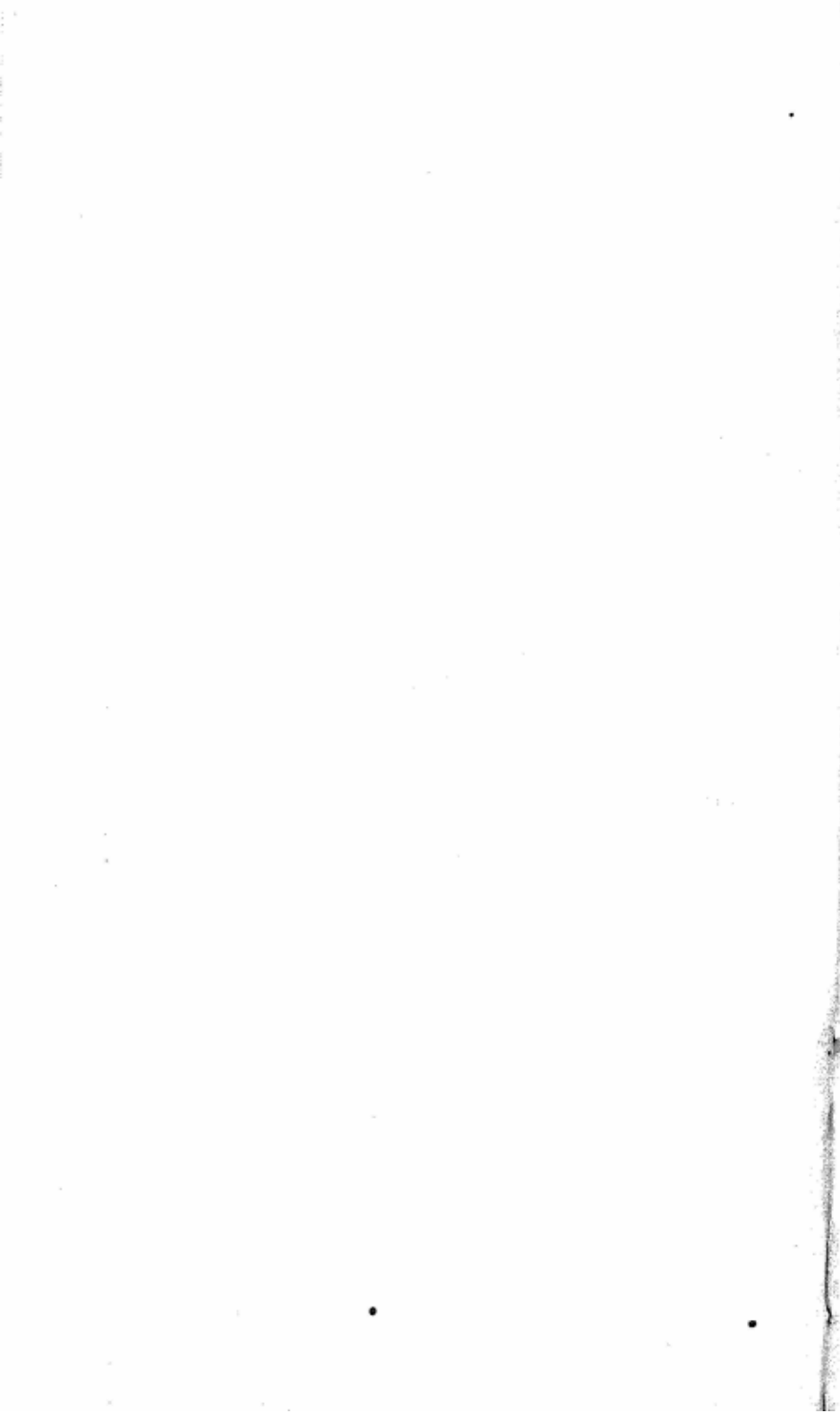
of colour or creed. The penniless and parsimonious condition which we are reduced to, consequent on the failure of our former Government service, has thrown us into such an ever lasting despondency, that we speak from the very core of our hearts, that we would travel into the remotest corners of the earth, ascend the snowy peaks of the Himalya, wander the forlorn regions of Siberia, could we be convinced that by so travelling we would be blessed with a Government appointment of ten shillings a week.¹"

Apart from its social and political implications, the rise of the British power in India had certain serious economic consequences. Formerly Indian goods were exported from India by the Portuguese, the Dutch and the Arabs, but now these exports disappeared completely and India remained a source of raw materials and this reduced the national income.

Indian craftsman suffered a serious blow on the fall of the landed aristocracy. The invention of power-loom destroyed the remnant of industries. The British destroyed the Indian industrial centres of Surat, Dacca, Murshidabad and other places. The arts of spinning and weaving which for ages had afforded employment to thousands were deliberately destroyed in the interest of British factories of Manchester and London.

It is in this context of the nominal Mughal authority of Delhi, the stern and harsh administration of the Sikhs in the Punjab and the rising tide of British Imperialism over the whole of northern India that the political thought and attitudes of the contemporary Muslims have been studied.

1. Mr. E. W. Molony, C. S., Quoted by Hunter, p. 176.



CHAPTER II

SHAH ABDUL AZIZ AND HIS POLITICAL IDEAS (1746-1824)



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The most seminal personality in the history of Indian Islam in the 18th century was that of Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi (1703-1762). He was not only a religious teacher of great eminence but a refined and profound political thinker also. The Mughal Empire crumbled to pieces before his eyes and the country passed into an ever-deepening economic crisis in his life time. Born in such an age of political and economic disintegration, he applied his mind to an analysis of the causes of political decay and economic chaos. According to Dr. Tara Chand he, "was confronted with some of the knottiest problems of Society and State, of religion, ethics and politics.....in the sphere of politics he was probably the only Muslim thinker who had a clear insight into the intimate relations between ethics, politics and economics. Waliullah's conception of justice invites comparison with that of Plato in its comprehensiveness and depth. The process of thought by which they arrived at the idea were, however, different.

Wali Ullah's philosophy contained valuable elements of thought which, if properly developed, could have helped in the solution of the tangled problems of Indian life, but unfortunately the times were adverse and the philosopher's resources inadequate."¹

In his monumental work *Hujjat-ullah-il-Balighah* he gives the following reasons for the political and economic crisis of his age :

"The ruin of the State these days is due to two reasons : Firstly, pressure on the public treasury which

1. Tara Chand, *History of India's Freedom*, Vol. I, pp. 206-8.

is due to the fact that the people have developed a habit of obtaining money from the exchequer without performing a corresponding duty. They either come out with the excuse that they are soldiers or 'ulama and have therefore a claim on the treasury : or they claim to belong to that group of men to whom the king himself presents rewards i.e., pious Sufis or poets or other groups who receive stipends without doing any service to the State. These people diminish the sources of other people's income and are a burden on the economy. The second cause of this widespread desolation is the heavy taxation on peasants, merchants and workers and unjust dealings with these groups. The result is that all those who are loyal to the State and obey its orders are being slowly ruined. The refractory and the evaders of taxes are becoming more refractory and they do not pay the taxes. The prosperity of a country depends upon light taxes and reasonable and necessary appointments in the army and other departments. The people should clearly understand this secret."¹

A man with a very sensitive soul and a keen observant eye, Shah Wali Ullah lived through a period of anarchy and war in the country and witnessed the failure of the Mughals to control the contumacious elements. He completely lost faith in the Mughal Empire as well as in the institution of hereditary monarchy² which killed all democratic spirit, developed narrow-mindedness of the ruling class, led to economic exploitation of the people, placed unnecessary burden of taxation on the people and increased the misery and oppression of the peasants and the artisans. He boldly criticized the ruling class for its exploitation of the masses, its corruption and inertia. He reacted to the attitude of the nobility in these words,

"Oh Amirs ! Do you not fear God ? (How is it that) you have so completely thrown yourself into the pursuit of momentary pleasures, and have neglected those people who were committed to your care ! The result is that the strong are devouring the (weak) people.....All your mental faculties are directed

1. *Hujjat-ullah-il-Baligha*, Vol. I, p. 79.

2. *Ibid.*, I, p. 199.

towards providing yourselves with sumptuous food and softskinned and beautiful women for enjoyment and pleasure. You do not turn your attention to anything except good clothes and magnificent palaces."¹

He was also critical of the attitude of the soldiers and advised them to inculcate the true spirit of *jihad* and discipline. In his writings one hears the distant echoes of a democratic spirit which viewed the existing political and social structure from the point of view of a common man, something which was unique in those days. The way he addresses the people to play their legitimate role in the political life gives a significant democratic touch to his whole approach. He stressed the need of equity and justice in the life of the individual and equilibrium (*tawazun*) in economic relationship, which could alone help in building a sound and stable political structure. He agreed with Plato and Aristotle to promote the virtue and intelligence of the people themselves.

His political ideas centred round the growing needs of the workers, the artisans and the peasants and these ideas could only be practiced in the peaceful conditions and, consequently, he directed his energy for the restoration of peace and tranquility in the country.

And in the religious sphere he broke the monopoly of the religious classes by translating the Quran into Persian and making its content intelligible to all people. Thus Shah Wali Ullah played a very vital role in the political and religious life of the people.

His thought determined the drift and direction of Muslim political and religious thought of the succeeding generations. The most obvious impact of his thinking could be seen in the life and activities of his son, Shah Abdul Aziz, who succeeded to his father's chair in the *Madrasa-i-Rahimiya*

1. *Tafhimat-i-Ilahia*, published by the Majlis-i-Ilmi, Dehail, as quoted in Shah Waliullah Number of *Al-Furqan*, pp. 134-135.

at the age of 18 and continued his work in both the political and the academic sphere. In fact his thought is more relevant to our discussion as he lived upto 1824.

Life of Shah Abdul Aziz :

Shah Abdul Aziz, the eldest son of Shah Wali Ullah, was born in 1159 A. H./1746 A. D. Ghulam Halim is his chronogrammatic name indicating the year of his birth.¹ He received his early education from two eminent disciples of his father, Khwaja Muhammad Amin and Shaikh Muhammad Ashiq of Phulat. Then he entered the seminary, *Madrasa-i-Rahimiya* of his father and made a thorough study of the *Masabih*, the *Musawwah fi Sharh Muwatta* and the *Siha Sitta*. He possessed a prodigious memory. He learnt the classical collections of *ahadis*, the *Siha Sitta*, almost by heart. He thus completed his education at the feet of his father, Shah Waliullah in 1174/1760 while still in his teens. In 1763 he succeeded to the chair of his father at the *Madrasa-i-Rahimiya* and began to instruct the students in religious sciences, particularly the *Quran* and the *Hadis*. People came from far and near to learn at his feet. He carried the ideas of his father to a wider circle than the latter had been able to do. Amongst his pupils appear the names² of Shah Rafi Uddin Dihlawi, Shah Abdul Qadir Dihlawi, Shah Muhammad Ishaq, Shah Muhammad Yaqub, Shah Abdul Hai, Shah Muhammad Ismail, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid, Maulana Rashid Uddin Dihlawi, Shah Ghulam Ali Dihlawi, Hasan Ali Lakhnawi, Shah Rauf Ahmad, Shah Fazl-ur-Rahman Ganj Moradabadi, Shah Abu Said, Shah Zahurul Haq, Awlad Husain (father of Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan)—all well-known figures in the realm of Muslim religious learning.

Of the works that Shah Abdul Aziz wrote on various

1. *Tuhfa-i-Ithna Ashariyya*, p. 10.

2. See *Tazkira-i-Ulama-i-Hind*, Lucknow 1914, pp. 172, 47, 50-51, 66-67, 162-163, 56-57, 145, 172,

topics of religion the *Fath ul-Aziz*¹, *Bustan-ul-Muhaddisin*², *Ujala-i-Nafia*³, *Tuhfa-i-Isna-i-Ashariya*⁴ and *Zikr-ul-Shahadat ain*⁵ deserve particular mention. Shah Abdul Aziz died on the 7th of Shawwal 1239/1824.

His Political Thought and Activities :

Shah Abdul Aziz lived in Delhi for nearly 78 years. During this period Delhi passed through one of the most momentous periods of her history. From the third battle of Panipat (1761) to the entry of Lord Lake's forces in Delhi (1803), he saw Delhi passing through many political vicissitudes. This quick drama of political change conditioned his political thought. Significantly enough, while he condemned the Sikh, the Jat and Maratha depredations, he did not declare the country under their control as *Dar-ul-Harb*, but when the British power was established in northern India — though it had checked the instable conditions prevailing previously—he issued a *fatwa* declaring all land under the British occupation as *Dar-ul-Harb*.

The *fatwa* runs as follows :⁶

“.....In this city (Delhi) the Imam ul-Muslimin wields no authority. The real power rests with Christian officers. There is no check on them; and the promulgation of the commands of *Kufr* means that in administration and justice, in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues—everywhere the *Kuffar* (*infidels*) are in power. Yes, there are certain Islamic rituals, e.g. Friday and Eid prayers, *azan* and cow-slaughter, with which they brook no interference; but the very root of all these rituals is of no value to them. They demolish mosques without the least hesitation and no Muslim or any *Zimmi* can enter into the city or its suburbs but with their permission. It is in their own

1. Published Lucknow, 1268, A. H.

2. Published Delhi, 1893, A. H.

3. Published Lahore, 1302, A. H.

4. Nawal Kishore Press, 1896.

5. Published Delhi, 1869.

6. *Fatawa-i-Azizi*, Matba-i-Mujtabai, Delhi, 1311 A. H., p. 17.

interests if they do not object to the travellers and traders to visit the city. On the other hand, distinguished persons like Shuja-ul-Mulk and Wilayati Begum cannot dare visit the city without their permission. From here (Delhi) to Calcutta the Christians are in complete control. There is no doubt that in principalities like Hyderabad, Rampur, Lucknow, etc., they have left the administration in the hands of the local authorities; but it is because they have accepted their lordship and have submitted to their authority."

To appreciate clearly the significance of this fatwa, it is necessary to clarify the distinction between *Dar-ul-Islam* and the *Dar-ul-Harb*.

In Muslim constitutional law the world is divided into *Dar-ul-Harb* and *Dar-ul-Islam*. *Dar-ul-Islam* or an 'abode of Islam' is a country where the ordinances of Islam are established and which is under the rule of a Muslim Sovereign. Its inhabitants are Muslims and also non-Muslims who have submitted to Muslim control and who, under certain restrictions and without the possibility of full citizenship, are guaranteed their lives and property by the Muslim State. The *Dar-ul-Harb* or the *Abode of War* is that which is not, but which, actually or potentially, is a seat of war for Muslims until by conquest it is turned into '*Abode of Islam*'. Thus to turn *dar-ul-harb* into *dar-ul-Islam* is the object of *jihad*, and theoretically, the Muslim State is in a constant state of warfare with the non-Muslim world.

The '*Abode of Islam*' does not become '*Abode of War*' except on the following conditions :

- i. that the legal decisions of unbelievers are regarded and those of Islam are not;
- ii. that the country immediately adjoins an abode of war, no Muslim country coming between;
- iii. that there is no longer protection for Muslim and their non-Muslim dhimmis.

Of these, the first is the most important, and some have even held that so long as a single legal decision (*hukum*) of Islam is observed and maintained, a country cannot

become a *dar-ul-Harb*; when a Muslim country does become a *dar-ul-Harb*, it is the duty of all Muslims to withdraw from it, and a wife who refuses to accompany her husband in this, is in fact divorced.¹

Now this *fatwa* has a significance of its own in the history of Muslim political thought of the 19th century. It was the first and determined expression of Muslim attitude towards the establishment of British rule in India. That in 1857 people often referred to this *fatwa*² shows the extent to which it had influenced the contemporary Muslim thought. The following aspects of this *fatwa* deserve particular mention :

- (1) Shah Abdul Aziz had been at the helm of academic life in Delhi since 1763 when his father breathed his last. During the period 1763-1803 he saw Delhi being subjected to frequent depredations and plunders by the Jats, the Sikhs, and the Marathas. In his Arabic poems³ he has referred to the atrocities committed by them. In 1771 he had seen the Marathas occupy the city of Delhi and Visaji being appointed as the collector of the revenues of Delhi and the Districts around the capital.⁴ In 1784 Mahadji Sindhia was the regent at Delhi.⁵—But Shah Abdul Aziz did not declare India as *Dar-ul-Harb* on that account.
- (2) His opposition to the establishment of British rule in India was not due to any religious reasons (he confesses that the English people do not interfere in the performance of Islamic rituals), but due to the fact that in “administration and in justice,

1. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 63-69.

2. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, Calcutta, 1945, p. 134.

3. *Hayat-i-Wali*, pp. 328-329.

4. Sarkar, *Fall of the Mughal Empire*, Vol. III, pp. 21-22.

5. *Ibid*, p. 203.

in matters of law and order, in the domain of trade, finance and collection of revenues" they had become all-powerful.

Shah Abdul Aziz was not satisfied merely with the pronouncement of the *fatwa*. He went further and gave a lead in organizing the resistance movement. As he was too old to participate in it actively, he sent Sayyid Ahmad Barelwi to the camp of Amir Ali Khan in Rajputana who was fighting against the British in collaboration with Jaswant Rao Holkar.

While Shah Abdul Aziz was exhorting his followers to resist the establishment of British rule in India, he was quick in realizing the great potentialities of Western science and learning. He permitted his pupils to acquire knowledge of English and praised the technical skill of the Englishmen.¹ This position was extremely realistic and enlightened. "This position was not, however, maintained by the succeeding generations. Those who studied the English language and sciences willingly accepted British rule, and those who refused to accept British rule totally refused to learn the English language and literature. As was inevitable, two diametrically opposite tendencies developed in Muslim religious and social attitudes, one represented by the Aligarh movement under Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and the other by the Deoband school of thought under Maulana Muhammad Qasim."²

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1. *Mulfuzat-i-Shah Abdul Aziz*, p. 51; *Fatawa-i-Azizi*, p. 195, also see Tara Chand : *History of the Freedom Movement* Vol. II, p. 351.
 2. *Ency. of Islam*, Revised Edition article on Hind—Islam by Prof. K. A. Nizami.

CHAPTER III

THE WAHHABI IDEOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON INDO-MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT



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The trials of Ambala (1864), Patna (1865), Malda (1870) and Rajmahal (1870) highlighted the presence and the impact of the Wahhabi doctrines on the Indian political life. The publication of W. W. Hunter's book *The Indian Musalmans* in 1872 further brought the Wahhabis into the forefront though he made a rather too wide an application of the term and put every one who did not like the British government in the category of 'Wahhabis'. The term *Wahhabi*, consequently, became a bye-word for a rebel. Since Hunter's use of the word Wahhabi had created suspicion and fear in the minds of the Englishmen against a very large number of Muslims, Sir Sayyid Ahmad Khan wrote a review on Hunter's book and refuted many of his charges. The position, however, was that the Wahhabi ideology had exercised a very deep influence on the religious and political life of the Indian Muslims in the first half of the 19th century.

Wahhabism derives its name from Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab (1703-1783), one of the most powerful personalities in the History of Islamic people in the 18th century.

Abdul Wahhab studied at Medina under Sulaiman al-Kurdi and Muhammad Hayat of Sind.¹ For several years he travelled far and wide in the Arab countries and returned home impressed with the idea that Islam, as practised by his contemporaries, had deviated widely from the orthodox practice and theory, as practised by the Prophet and the Quran. He therefore made up his mind to purge it and

1. See Margoliouth's article in the *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 618.

restore it to its primitive strictness. He drew his inspiration primarily from Ibn Taimiya.¹

Margoliouth has thus summarised the chief doctrines of the Wahhabis on the basis of *Lam'al-Shihab fi sirat Muhammad Abdul Wahhab* :

1. All objects of worship other than Allah are false and all who worship such deserve death.
2. The bulk of mankind are not monotheists, since they endeavour to win God's favour by visiting the tombs of saints; their practice therefore resembles what is recorded in the Quran of the Meccan *mushrikin*.
3. It is polytheism (*shirk*) to introduce the name of a prophet, saint, or angel into a prayer.
4. It is *shirk* to seek intercession from any but Allah.
5. It is *shirk* to make vows to any other being.
6. It involves unbelief (*kufir*) to profess knowledge not based on the Quran, the Sunna, or the necessary inferences of the reason.
7. It involves unbelief and heresy (*ilhad*) to deny *Qadar* in all acts.
8. It involves unbelief to interpret the Quran to *tawil*.²

But this theological puritanism alone did not exhaust the basic ideology of the Wahhabis. They believed in influencing the political life also and this brought them into conflict with the political powers of the day. When Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab reached Dariya and built a mosque, he instructed people not only in his *Kitab ul Tawhid*, but gave instruction in the use of fire arms also.³ There was conflict with the Shaikh of Riyaz which lasted 28 years. The

1, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 618.

2. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, article on *Wahhabiya*, p. 618.

3, Margoliouth, *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 619.

Wahhabis built a fort at every place that they captured and appointed a *qazi* and a *mufti* at every such place. Philby has described in detail how the power of the Wahhabis increased under *Ibn Sa'ud*. In 1792 Abdul Wahhab died at the age of 89. The Wahhabi activities continued as usual and Philby says that in 1811 "the Wahhabi empire extended from Aleppo in the north to the Indian Ocean (?) and from the Persian Gulf and the Iraq frontier in the east to the Red Sea."¹

The Wahhabi doctrines spread into many Muslim countries. We find them active in Egypt, Arabia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Schuyler mentions the presence of Wahhabi preachers in Khojend.² What helped them in the propagation of their views was the fact that with Hejaz as their headquarter they could very easily establish contact with the large number of pilgrims who thronged there from almost every part of the Muslim world.

When did the ideas of Abdul Wahhab reach India? It is difficult to answer this question. His name does not appear in the religious literature produced in India during the 18th century. It is, however, not improbable that Shah Wali Ullah came into contact with the Wahhabis during his visit to Hejaz. In his Persian translation of the Quran, *Fath ur Rehman*, he remarks at one place that he had come to know the movements and conditions of the Muslim world during his stay in Arabia. If *Tuhfat ul-Muwahhidin* is not incorrectly attributed to Shah Wali Ullah, it can hardly be denied that he had been deeply impressed by the Wahhabi doctrines. However, Shah Wali Ullah had his own ideology in which he could not successfully weave the anti-sufi teachings of Abdul Wahhab and therefore his attachment with the Wahhabi movement is not definite. Lately the authorship of *Tuhfat ul-Muwahhidin* has become the subject of controversy and it is very doubtful if Shah Wali Ullah ever wrote it.

The Wahhabi ideology came to India some decades

1. H. St. John Philby, *Arabia*, London 1930.

2. *Turkistan*, London, 1867, Vol. II, p. 254.

after the death of Shah Wali Ullah. It was Sayyid Ahmad of Rai Bareli who, during his visit to Mecca in 1822-1823, was deeply impressed by the Wahhabi ideology and on his return to India organized his work on the lines of Abdul Wahhab. To quote Hunter :—

“Whatever was dreaming in his nature now gave place to a fiery ecstasy, in which he beheld himself planting the Crescent throughout every district of India Whatever had been indistinct in his teaching henceforth assumed the precision of that force, formulated theology, by which ‘Abdul Wahhab had founded a great kingdom of Arabia, and which Sayyid Ahmad hoped would enable him to rear a still greater and more lasting Empire in India.”¹

Sayyid Ahmad was fully conscious that the lost political supremacy in India could be re-established only by starting a struggle in the north and consolidating power in the north-west frontier which would be used as a base of operations for further expansion in the country.

Sayyid Ahmad had already won favour for his movement in India and founded a permanent head-quarter at Patna, appointed four Khalifas and an Imam and finally in 1824 he was on the Peshawar frontier. December 31, was fixed for *Jihad* and in spite of all powerful resistance by the Sikhs, he established himself temporarily in Peshawar. He himself performed the duties of a military commander. An endless stream of army poured into the Punjab through the Khyber Pass, but theological controversies weakened his rank and he met his end at Balakot fighting with the Sikhs in 1831.

Though his untimely death prevented a possible Wahhabi conquest of northern India, the movement was carried on with great zeal. His followers succeeded in injecting disaffection and hatred against the British Raj throughout India. After the conquest of the Punjab the Wahhabis came into direct conflict with the British. The English had to

1. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, Second Edition, London, 1872, p. 61.

face a number of costly wars on the Frontier. But the British were better equipped and better organized and so the Wahhabi movement was mercilessly crushed during the years 1860-1870.

The most difficult situation faced by the British in the beginning of the 19th century was due to the uncompromising attitude of the Wahhabis. They greatly influenced the Rohillas, for whose extermination Britishers had venally lent their troops fifty years before. It was the result of the success of the Wahhabi movement, which brought the peasants of South Bengal to the scene under the leadership of Shariat Ullah and came to be known as the '*Farai'zi*' movement. Both these movements were efficiently organized to preserve primitive Islam by restoring the lost political power and authority.

After the death of Sayyid Ahmad the leadership of the movement passed into the hands of Wilayat Ali and Inayat Ali of Patna. The Wahhabis occupied a portion of territory along the Indus and organised a Rebel Camp at Sittana;¹ after the annexation of the Punjab by the British they fought with great zeal and the continuous supply of arms and other things from the region of the Gangetic Delta helped in carrying on fight against the British. Dealing with the nature and complexion of the Wahhabi movement, Hunter says :

"The presence of Wahhabis in a district is a standing menace to all classes.....possessed of property or vested rights.....Indian Wahhabis are extreme dissenters..... Anabaptists, Fifth Monarchy men, so to speak, touch-

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1. "The Wahhabi movement thus became a constant source of trouble to the government of India, since a system was devised whereby funds were collected and men selected and trained to be sent first to the headquarters of the Community at Patna, and thence to the frontier camp of Sittana, and thereafter employed in fighting against the non-Muslim rulers of India." *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 620-21.

ing matters of faith : *Communists and Red Republicans in politics*.....In 1827—30; it was against an obdurate Musalman Governor of Peshawar, quite as much as against the Hindu Sikhs, that their divine leader turned their arms. In the present rising around Calcutta in 1831, they broke into the houses of Musalmans and Hindu landholders with perfect impartiality.....The official description of the Sect, fifteen years afterwards, "as a gathering of 80,000 men asserting complete equality among themselves, and drawn from the lower classes", would make any landed gentry in the world indignantly uncomfortable. "Every Musalman priest with a dozen acres attached to his mosque or wayside shrine has been shrieking against the Wahhabis during the past half century..... The well-to-do Musalmans.....had the whole vested interests of the Musalman clergy to back them, and by degrees drew out a learned array to defend their position....." Further he says, 'They (Wahhabis) appeal boldly to the masses, and their system whether of religion or of politics, is eminently adopted to the hopes and fears of a restless populace.'¹

The officer who was the incharge of the Wahhabi prosecution wrote : "I attribute the great hold which Wahhabi doctrines have on the mass of the Muhammadan peasantry to our neglect of their education."²

The Wahhabi movement reached its highest watermark in the struggle of 1857, which is regarded as the first War of liberation to get rid of foreign yoke. But the 'Mutiny' was considered to be the most suitable time for the crown to take over finally the control of the Indian political power. The British had realized that peace would not return to India unless this wide-spread and publicly appreciated move-

1. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p. III. Second Edition, London, 1872.

2. Mr. James, O Kinealy, C. S. *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 158.

ment is completely crushed and its organization annihilated. Severest ways were found out to destroy the Wahhabis and ultimately they met their end through persecution which continued for nearly a quarter of a century. Hunter in his book admits that, "the cost of watching the Wahhabis and keeping them within bounds, amounts in a single province to be as much as would suffice for the administration, judicial and criminal, of a British district containing one third of the whole population of Scotland."¹

So we find that within a short period of time the Wahhabi movement influenced so much the Indian political thought and attitude that its impact could be felt everywhere in the country ranging from Peshawar frontier to the Delta of Bengal. It brought about a tremendous change in the political outlook and attitude of the Muslims.

It has become a tendency with some text book writers on the subject to prove the movement as anti-Hindu. But an unprejudiced study shows that it is a fallacy and lack of historical knowledge to say that the movement was directed against the Hindus also. W. Cantwell Smith is perfectly justified in saying that in the movement there was inherent emphasis on the necessity of cooperation between Hindus and Muslims to face the common enemy.²

Later on the Wahhabi movement so energetically and efficiently launched by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid suffered serious set-back as differences crept into the rank and file of the movement. Some of them preferred to be called themselves *Ahl-i-Hadith* and did not like the term "Wahhabi." Observing such serious differences the Government itself did not use the term 'Wahabbi' in official correspondence and despatches. They were further divided on petty differences and ultimately having forgotten their main purpose met their end.

1. W. W. Hunter, p. 100.

2. W. C. Smith, p. 190.

Trial of important Wahhabi Personalities :

The conquest of the Punjab, brought the British and the Wahhabis into direct conflict and several wars took place on the frontier. And the British thought that only a ruthless destruction of this sect would bring peace in the country. Many trials and persecution took place which continued for a quarter of a century. When the War of liberation broke out many important personalities at Patna were thrown into jail. W. Tayler, the commissioner of Patna Division, carefully watched the activities of Shah Mohammad Husain, Maulvi Ahmad Ullah and Maulvi Waizul Haqq. In his words, "From private information obtained from many sources I had reason to believe that the saintly gentlemen were busying themselves to a very unusual extent, and what rendered their conduct peculiarly suspicious, was that an intimacy appeared to have suddenly sprung up between them and one, Looft Ali Khan, the rich banker of the city, who being a Sheah, was an unnatural subject for such connexion and who was generally believed to be secretly engaged in traitorous designs."¹

In 1852 some more activities of the Mujahidin were noticed by the British and an hostile correspondence was seized by the Punjab authorities. The letters clearly showed that men, money and arms were being sent from the Patna headquarter, Meerut and Rawalpindi to the Frontier. After carefully watching all these activities which posed a direct threat to the British supremacy and power in India, the following eleven persons, were tried.²

1. Maulvi Yahya Ali of Sadiqpur, a very active member of the movement. At the time of trial his age was 42.
2. Maulvi Abdur Rahim, a member of the same family. He was 28.

1. Tayler, W: *The Patna Crisis* (London, 1858), p. 47.

2. History of the Freedom Movement (Pakistan), part II, Vol II, p. 372.

3. Mian Abdul Ghaffar, a servant of Maulvi Yahya Ali, aged 25.
4. Ilahi Baksh, the mukhtar of Maulvi Ahmad Ullah of Sadqipur.
5. Husaini, son of Meghu of Patna. He was a servant of Ilahi Bakhsh and was of 35 years of age.
6. Abdul Ghafoor, son of Shah 'Ali Khan, of Shahbad. He was 25 years old.
7. Maulvi Muhammad Jafar of Thanesar, aged 28, author of the first biography of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in Urdu.
8. Muhammad Shafi of Ambala, an army contractor who supplied meat to the troop. His head office was at Rawalpindi, but he had his agents in a number of cantonments in northern India.
9. 'Abdul Karim of Ambala, aged 35, the mukhtar and a relation of Muhammad Shafi.
10. Husaini, son of Muhammad Baksh of Thanesar, an assistant of Maulvi Muhammad Jafar. He was 25 years old; and
11. Qazi Mian Jan, according to the judge it was from his house that the major portion of anti-British correspondence was discovered.

Most important and influential of them were Maulvi Yahya Ali and Maulvi Jafar Thanessari.¹ After a considerable long trial, their guilt was proved. Maulvi Yahya 'Ali, Maulvi Mohammad Jafar, and Maulvi Muhammad Shafi

1. "He corresponded with all the itinerant preachers as Spiritual Director of the Sect in India. He organised and personally worked a complicated system of drafts in a secret language, by which he safely transmitted large sums from the centre of the Empire to the Rebel Camp beyond the Frontier." W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalman*, p. 92.

were sentenced to death and the rest to life imprisonment. The property of all of them was also confiscated. All the members worked with strict secrecy under fictitious names,¹ and used code words.

Another equally important trial took place in 1865 in which Maulvi Ahmad Ullah of Patna was tried. His property was snatched away and was sentenced to life imprisonment². He was arrested during 1857.

1. Real names along with their fictitious names were; Maulvi Yahya Ali—Muhi-ud-din; Maulvi Fayyaz 'Ali—Bashir-ud-din; Maulvi Abdullah—Babu Sahib; Muhammad Shafi—Shafat Ali; Maulvi Abdur Rahim—Rahim Beg; Maulvi Abdullah—Ahmad Ali.

Malka and Sittana, one after the other came to be called Bara Godam or big godown and Patna as Chhota Godam or small godown. *History of the Freedom Movement (Pakistan)*, Vol. II, Part II, p. 374.

2. Selection from the Records of Bengal Govt. No. XLII, pp. 102-103.

CHAPTER IV

THE MOVEMENT OF SAYYID AHMAD SHAHID-IDEOLOGY, IMPACT AND AFTERMATH (1786-1831)



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THE MOVEMENT OF SAYYID AHMAD SHAHID- IDEOLOGY IMPACT AND AFTERMATH (1786-1831)

In the Muslim religio-political thought of the early decades of the 19th century, Sayyid Ahmad Shahid occupies a unique place. He was not merely a political thinker, he was an active political agitator and organizer also. He stirred the calm and placid surface of Muslim political life to its very depths and, though he did not succeed in realizing his objectives, he left a deep mark on contemporary politics and the ramifications of his movement could be seen in different parts of the country and in different forms of social and political activity.

Sayyid Ahmad, son of Sayyid Irfan, was born on Monday, November 29, 1786. As regards his date of birth there is a difference of opinion. Muhammad Jafar Thanasari points out that he was born on 1st Muharrum.¹ His father died in 1800 A. D. when Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was only of thirteen years of age.

On his father's death, he had to face a number of hardships, and saw much of the country through the eyes of a penniless wanderer, who did not always know where his next meal would come from and where he would sleep. Having a combination of innumerable qualities and possessing a highly attractive personality, he was really capable of leadership. He whole-heartedly believed in a practical and ideal life and so he had acquired very little of traditional learning.² He, however, approached Shah Abdul Aziz of

1. Muhammad Jafar Thanasari—*Twarikh-i-Ajibah*, p. 3, 1201 A. H.

2. *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyah*, Vol. I, p. 32 • and *Makhzan-i-Ahmadi*, folio 16, which contains the most authentic information about his early life as its author, Muhammad Ali, was his nephew.

Delhi and got initiated into the *Chishtiah*, *Qadiriya* and *Naqshbandia* orders. Later, Shah Abdul Aziz appointed him as his *Khalifa*.

Since India had been declared *Dar-ul-Harb* or the 'Land of the Enemy' by Shah Abdul Aziz, he began to preach *Jihad* to the common people. As a result every one who came into contact with him made up his mind to lay down his life at his order. In 1821, he went to Mecca for Haj. It was during his tour to Arabia that he came under the influence of the Wahhabi ideology and came to know its impact on the vast mass of people. He brought this ideology with him as a political instrument for the restoration of Muslim supremacy. Just after his return from Mecca he began to give final shape to his reform movement, which came to an end on Friday the 6th May, 1831 when he was killed at Balakot with a large number of his followers, including Maulana Ismail who was the life and blood of his movement. On his death, there were joyful ceremonies at the court of Ranjit Singh who, "ordered a Royal salute to be fired and the city of Amritsar to be illuminated in honour of the event."¹

Sayyid Ahmad aimed at the regeneration of Islam both in the religious and the political spheres. He had a religious approach both towards life and towards politics.² His ardent faith

1. W. W. Hunter (1945 Calcutta) p. 53 also see *Umdat-ul-Tawarikh* (Ranjit Singh distributed thousands of rupees to the poor and the needy and held royal feast), p. 341.
2. "The kingdom and religion are twins" is a dictum based on the bed-rock of fact. Although the maxim is not an argument based on religious principles, it does serve a purpose. Religion rests on kingdom and the religious orders appertaining to kingdom lapse in the absence of it. The failure of the Muslims, their humiliation at the hands of infidels, the profanity of religious principles, and the sacrilege of the places of worship as a corollary are evident." *Nadvi-Sirat Sayyid Ahmad Shahid* p, 359. The similar philosophy is to be found in Iqbal when he says :

in the unity of God and the supremacy of the Quran as the true guide of man inspires his letters and political statements. His thought and attitude towards life and politics confirmed that, "the essence of Tauhid as a working idea, is equality, solidarity and freedom. The State, from the Islamic stand point, is an endeavour to transform these principles into space-time forces, an aspiration to realize them in definite human organization.¹" His thought was greatly affected by the teachings of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi and more directly by Shah Wali Ullah. Besides, he had a burning love for India and earnestly believed in the freedom of the country. It was under the shadow of the catastrophe of 1857 that an entirely different colour was given to his movement. How interpolations were made in his letters by the people after 1857 may be seen from the following passages where in place of the *Britishers*, the word *Sikh* has been substituted.²

اصل عبارت تاریخ عجیبہ میں منقولہ عبارت

۱- نصاریٰ نہ وہیدہ خصال و مشرکین بد مآل بر اکثر بلاد
۱- سہان نہ وہیدہ خصال و مشرکین بد مآل بر اکثر
ہندوستان از لب دریائے اباسین اقطاع غربی ہندوستان از لب
تاساحل دریائے شور کہ تخریبند دریائے اباسین قادر السلطنت
شش ماہ را کہ باشد تسلط یافتند۔ دہلی تسلط یافتند۔

(مکاتیب شاہ اسماعیل) ۵۳ (تاریخ عجیبہ ۸۹-۱۹۰)

سیاست نے مذہب سے پیچھا چھڑایا
چلی کچھ نہ پیر کلیسا کی پیری

ہوئی دین میں جس دم جدائی
ہوس کی وزیری ہوس کی امیری

M. Iqbal. *Bal-e-Jibril*, 7th ed. Lahore 1947, p. 160.

"Politics liberated itself from religion, the head of the church found himself powerless. As soon as religion and politics became separated, greed became the ruling power, king and minister both."

1. Iqbal—*Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam*, p. 154.
2. Ghulam Rasul Mehr—*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, pp. 250-260.

۲- نه با کس از اُمراء مسلمانين منازعت داريم و نه با کي از روساے مومنين مخالفت -
 نه با کفار لعام مقابله داريم نه با مدعيان اسلام - با دراز مويان بلکه سائر کفر جويان مقاتله خواهيم - نه با کلمه گويان و اسلام جويان چنانچه اين معنى معلوم خاص و عام است -

۳- کفار فرنگ که بر هندوستان تسلط يافته اند - نهايت تجربه کار و هوشيار و حيله باز و مکار -
 کفار دراز مويان که بر ملک پنجاب تسلط يافته اند نهايت تجربه کار و هوشيار اند و حيله باز و مکار -
 (ايضاً ص ۱۷۵)

۴- آيا دين قوم از جمله نصارى يهود يا مجوس و هندو اند که با ملت محمديه عداوت مي دارند -
 بے شک آن قوم از جمله مجوس ياسکه يا هندو اند که با ملت محمديه عداوت دارند - (ايضاً ص ۲۱۲) -

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid was neither a philosopher nor a politician for he made no discourses, but was definite in outlook and practical in thought and action. Though he refrained from giving any political theory or doctrine, he is counted among the great political figures of the 19th century. His active and bold participation in the jihad movement gave a political complexion to his personality. He spent major portion of his life in active service. Irrespective of political differences and prejudices, he made himself all those people acquainted with all sorts of problems, conditions and met who in his opinion could give him the slightest help in his mission of reform and re-orientation of Muslim Society.

He did not aim at restoring the Mughal Empire, or the establishment of another state under his sovereignty. He wanted to ensure the establishment of Islamic Kingdom and

to redress the wrongs done to the Muslims by the Sikhs and the British. That he was contemplating the political system exactly resembling the *Khailafat-i-Rashida* both in spirit and detail shows the unreal and out-of-context character of his movement and his approach.

To understand the real significance and importance of his mission for which he was finally to lay down his life on the battle field of Balakot, we must keep in view all previous Muslim political upheavals and the difficult situation then prevailing in the country. The collapse of religious and political authority of the Muslims had confirmed his mission and added greater enthusiasm to it. Muslims were so disturbed and all sorts of evils had crept into the society and no one knew where Muslim Society was going.

The distinguishing feature of Sayyid Ahmad's movement was his emphasis on the practical struggle for *jihad*. He used all his knowledge and spiritual quality to convince the people of the urgency of waging war for the establishment of an Islamic State. In a letter to Nawab Sulaiman Jah he says: "During the last few years fate has been so kind to the accursed Christians and the mischievous polytheists that they have started oppressing people. Atheistic and polytheistic practices are being openly practised while the Islamic observances have disappeared. This unhappy state of affairs fills my heart with sorrow and I am anxious to perform *hijrat*. My heart is filled with shame at this religious degradation and my head contains but one thought i. e. how to organize *jihad*.¹"

Since India had been declared as the land of the enemy it became obligatory either to organize *jihad* or to migrate permanently from it. He did not appreciate the idea of withdrawing permanently but advanced the idea of *jihad* and refuted all those arguments which prevented him from this course of action. He never thought of shedding

1. Quoted by Sayyid Abul Hasan Nadwi, p. 110.

Muslim blood in order to gain power again for the corrupt Muslim rulers but had an Islamic State in his mind as an ideal to strive for. He was not in favour of kingship and its history had convinced him not to have faith in it.

In history we find that the early reformers and statesmen who wished the continuance of Islamic traditions only appealed to the intellectuals and tried to have the cooperation of rulers and powerful political personalities and ignored the masses. But in the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid like J. S. Mill, there was due place for the masses as well as for the individual and fully realized the importance of popular support for the establishment of an effective Islamic State which gives due importance and place to the opinions and wishes of the common man. In this approach he was no less than Rousseau who formulated his theory of General will as his guiding conception. In his opinion like Rousseau and Bentham, the Government which did not carry the support of the majority was not worth keeping and the people should immediately get rid of it. It was only this love and affection for the common man which distinguished him as the first popular political guide in the country.

The indiscipline among the Mujahidins at Akora and Hazro led to a meeting on 11th January 1827 of chiefs, scholars and important Mujahidins who decided to choose Sayyid Ahmad Shahid as their Imam and requested him to assume full authority necessary for the success of the mission. He came to be known as "*Sayyid Badshah*" and the Sikhs called him by the name of "*Khalifa*." His *imamat* did not in any way interfere with the authority of the local chiefs and principalities, it only created a supreme authority for the successful prosecution of *jihad*. In the constitutional terminology it may be called a loose confederacy. His name was now included in the Khutbah of Friday. Some of the writers refer that even coins were minted in his name¹ but there is

1. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 621. First it appeared in *Princep's History of the Sikhs*, 1824.

no reliable historical evidence to prove it.

The *imamat* made the movement of *jihad* more powerful and within a short period of two months there assembled 80,000 men for the execution of *jihad* struggle. Most important of them were Yar Muhammad Khan and the Sardars of Peshawar. They provided a *lashkar* of 20,000 brave men with few canons.

The taking over of Peshawar after so much strife and strain, helped in establishing the outstanding political status of Sayyid Ahmad and became the most important political personality throughout the region and was regarded as possessing the best political mind and practical ability. His followers travelled to every nook and corner of the country and recruited people. The whole of the northern India from the remotest corner of East Bengal to the northern most hills of the Frontier, almost every town had a secret organization centered round the local mosque and guided by a band of noble spirits. The people who were regarded the backbone of the *jihad* were all men of scholarship and learning and had definite political aims.

The movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid though religious in nature was in conformity with the existing circumstances of the country. For nearly half a century the energy of the people in Northern India was utilized under his leadership¹ to regain lost power. It can never be denied that his presence led to the production of men of outstanding political insight and ripe political wisdom.

A special code for the successful conduct of diplomatic affairs is a modern phenomenon. But if we go back to Sayyid Ahmad we are astonished to see that he had already

1. "During 1820 the Apostle journeyed slowly southwards, his disciples rendering him menial services in acknowledgement of his spiritual dignity, and man of rank and learning running like common servants, with their shoes off, by the side of his palanquin." Hunter—*The Indian Mussalmans*, p. 13.

discovered a code for the easy conduct of his political affairs. No one could understand these letters except the few chosen persons.

He made a remarkable selection of his companions. All were of a very strong character. Ghulam Rasul Mehr relates that during their stay Mullah Kalim heard from some of the women of the village saying that either the companions of Sayyid Ahmad were saints or they had been deprived of sexual desires. They never had a look on the women. It was all due to the training of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.

Sayyid Ahmad Shahid achieved considerable success in his movement. He challenged the British who had created a situation which has been thus described in a Clacutta Persian paper (*Durbin*, July, 1869): "All sorts of employment, great and small, are being gradually snatched away from the Muhammadans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Mohammadans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official post. Recently when several vacancies occurred in the office of the Sundarbans Commission that official, in advertising them in the Government Gazette stated that the appointment would be given to none but Hindus."¹

Sayyid Ahmad had a remarkable ability to influence the audience by his inspiring speeches. These speeches were collected by Shah Muhammad Ismail and Abdul Hai under the title "*Sirat-i-Mustaqim*". As Sayyid Ahmad had studied thoroughly the Indian political scene from different angles and with special reference to the conditions of the Muslims of India during the first half of 19th century, he could not only diagnose the disease, but also suggested the cure.

Physical Training :

Sayyid Ahmad believed that the state did not only

1. Durban, of 14th July 1869, quoted by Hunter—*Indian Musalmans*, p. 175, Second Ed. London, 1872.

require intellectuals but also physically fit and mentally alert people. Therefore his movement of *jihad* required most physically fit and sound man. He himself learnt swimming, wrestling, shooting and archery. As a result, he developed a robust physique and possessed great physical strength.¹ Here he resembles Plato who gave a special place to gymnastic in his scheme of education. He was very fond of playing games, particularly the games of bravery and military exercises. He used to divide his men into groups which fought mock battles. In this way he received military and physical training for his future struggle. He often used to carry weapons with him so that others also might realize its importance. He also advised others for the same. He thought that there was nothing better than *jihad*, actual physical struggle for a cause. In his letters to Sardar Budh Singh, Sardar Sultan Muhammad Khan and Sardar Said Muhammad Khan he says that he had accepted the leadership of the Muslims for the sole reason of organizing *jihad* as directed by Islam

The Aims & Objectives of Jihad :

In his correspondence with different leaders he had clearly and frankly expressed his views about *jihad* and had enumerated some of the causes which forced him to declare *jihad*. In one of his letters to Raja Hindu Rao, the then wazir of Gwalior he wrote :

“The strangers from across the Ocean became the rulers of India; the mere mercantilists laid the foundations of an empire; the masonic lodgings of the wealthy and the estates of the rich no longer existed, and their honour and repose was snatched away. Masters of domain and realm retired into the limbo of oblivion. At last it were only a few among the saints and the hermits who girdled their loins of courage. This group of fidels have raised their heads only for the service of God's own faith. They desire neither world nor power. When India will be freed

1. *Tawarikh-i-Ajibah*, p. 4, Nadvi, *Sirat Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, pp. 46, 48, 49. Mehr, *Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, pp. 1, 59, 60.

from aliens and enemies and the ambitions of the faithful have been fulfilled, the high ranks of the state and politics will be assigned to those who covet them."¹

This shows that he was actually the first fighter for Indian independence and, by throwing the English from the country², wanted to establish a pure national government in which there was to be no conflict with the ruler's religion and ideology. He was fully conscious of the danger to the country from the rapidly growing power of the East India Company and therefore he always required the cooperation and help of both the Muslim and non-Muslim leaders to face the common enemy. It was due to his anti-British attitude that he left the camp of Amir Khan as soon as the latter decided to enter into a treaty with the British.³

Choice of a strategic Frontier :

It was the urge of his political maturity and practical experience that this struggle should begin from the northern frontier where the powerful Afghan tribes could help such a movement and where there was a continuous range of Muslim rulers upto Turkistan. It was due to his political insight that he did not make India the centre of his political activities. Here he would have been forced to face hostile

1. Mehr—*Jamat Mujahidin*, pp. 13-14.

2. Some writers have tried to prove that his attitude was Pro-British but it was never so. Such a view is disproved by concrete historical evidence provided by his letters. Sir Syed's opinion that the Wahhabi movement was directed only towards Sikhs and not against the British, is no more tenable. There is sufficient authentic material to prove that the movement was first against the Sikhs and later on against the British. The statement of Ismail Shahid which Sir Syed has quoted in support of his argument is not corroborated from other sources and is, in fact, contradicted by the letter of Sayyid Ahmad.

3. Sayyid Ahmad wrote to Shah Abdul Aziz :—

"This humble fellow is shortly to meet your holiness. The troops here are pell-mell. The Nawab has coalesced with Frangi. The situation now leaves no room to tarry here." Mehr—*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 109.



powers from every side and it would have been practically difficult to face the Sikhs. In choosing the frontier as the centre of his activity he must have also considered the material status and bravery of the Afghans. Even in his native town Rai Bareli there was a locality of Pathans and he had already experience of their bravery and courage. Most of them were personally known to Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and they promised to help in his struggle. Once in his speech at Panjtar,¹ he referred about the choice of the frontier in these words, "In India I could not find a suitable place to begin my movement for *jihad* though most of the people promised to help in several ways."²

Actual Struggle :

Hunter says : "The Rebel camp on the Punjab Frontier owes its origin to Sayyid Ahmad, one of those bold spirits whom our extermination of the Pindari Power scattered over India half a century."³

Sayyid Ahmad having spent two years at home went to Malva and became the spectator of Amir Khan Pindari's activities. He joined the cavalry as a *sawar* in his army and lived there for seven years. He displayed his qualities of bravery in several battles and was soon promoted to the rank of Amir Khan's body guard. As he was always a source of inspiration, Amir Khan made him his chief adviser on all important political and military matters. W. W. Hunter, on account of prejudice, speaks of him as "a horse soldier in the service of a celebrated free-booter (Amir Khan) and for many years harried the rich opium growing villages of Malwa."⁴

1. On the frontier of Swat, near the district of Mardan, there was a locality of Pathans and it was for several years the centre of Sayyid Ahmad,
2. Abul Hasan Ali Nadvi, *Sirat-i-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, Part I, p. 379, Lahore.
3. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p. 11, Amir Khan Pindari, afterwards, Nawab of Tonk.
4. W.W, Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p.4, Second Edition(London) 1872

In 1817 when Sayyid Ahmad came to know the intention of Amir Khan to enter into a treaty with the British, he left his camp and came to Delhi. He felt that *jiḥād* could only achieve the desired objective through popular support and understanding. And now he started touring throughout the country and in a very little period changed the land between Delhi and Calcutta into a rebellion camp.

Once he happened to be in Rampur and it was there that he was told about the miserable condition of the Muslims in the Punjab. It was there that he made a plan¹ to save the Muslims in the Punjab and after that to wipe out the British from India. With the timely help of his two able lieutenants, Shah Ismail Shahid and Maulvi Abdul Hai, he organized such an effective reform movement that it soon took the shape of country-wide mass movement. Thousands of people performed *bait* and joined his movement.

As he was fighting Ranjit Singh in the Punjab, he also received the indirect help and support of the British who wanted the annihilation of Ranjit Singh's authority. The British connived at the collection of funds and recruitment for *jiḥād*. Particularly the decree against a merchant who had embezzled funds is a sufficient proof of such an attitude.² This attitude only continued so long as the Mujahidin were fighting the Sikhs, and as soon as they started anti-British propaganda, they also became the target of British opposition and criticism.

Within two years of his return from Mecca he comple-

1. M. Ikram—*Mauj-i-Kausar*, p. 16.

2. "A Hindu Banker of Delhi, entrusted with money for the Wahhabi cause on the frontier (that is to say Hundi or bills of exchange), embezzled the same, and a suit was brought against him before Mr. William Fraser, late commissioner of Delhi. The suit was decided in favour of the plaintiff, Maulvi Ishak (Shah Mohammad Ishaq), and the money paid in by the defendant was forwarded to the frontier by other means. The case was afterwards appealed to the Sudder Court at Allahabad, but the decision of the Lower Court was upheld," Review of Dr. Hunter's *Indian Musalmans*, p. 15.

ted all necessary preparations for *jihad*. On 16th January, 1826 he said good bye to his home for ever. At this time he was a man of extraordinary courage and political ability. In the beginning his companions were limited nearly to five or six hundred men. They marched towards north-western region and covered thousand of miles.

First they passed through Gwalior where specially Hindu Rao, the brother-in-law of the Maharaja, received them with great civility. Next to Gwalior, was Tonk, where he was already known to the founder of Tonk, Amir Khan. He provided Sayyid Ahmad with some funds and equipment. Then he proceeded towards Ajmer. From here Maulvi Abdul Hai was specially sent to Delhi for funds and from there he appeared at the scene of the *jihad* via Panipat, Karnal, Thanesar, Mamdot, Bahawalpur, Marwar, Sind, Baluchistan and Afghanistan.

Up to this time Sindh had not been annexed by the British and its rulers were the Mirs, who had differences with Jodhpur and were afraid of British plans. Therefore, Sayyid Ahmad's mission was suspected by the officials of Amarkot and Mirpur as a mission either from Jodhpur or the British.

But in Hyderabad he was given due attention and the whole party was entertained by the Mirs of Hyderabad, but failed to receive substantial help from them. From here Sayyid Ahmad went to see Bahawal Khan, the then ruler of Bahawalpur but like other Mirs of Hyderabad he refused to associate with Sayyid Ahmad.

The next place of his visit was Pirkot which was the head quarter of Sayyid Sibghat Ullah Shah, the founder of Hur movement. He was greatly influenced by him and helped in advancing the cause of *jihad* in Sind.

Next to Pir Kot they went to Shikarpur and passed through Jagan, Khangarh and Dhag to Dhadar which is situated at the foot of the Bolap pass, and to pass through it was really a difficult task. In Quetta they were respected

but due to the support of the chief of Baluchistan, Mihrab Khan refused to help him.

Having completed the tours of these places Sayyid Ahmad proceeded to Afghanistan, Qandhar, Ghaznin and Kabul, and established his headquarters at Naushera. At Qandhar he recruited 270 people and gave them an organization under the supervision of Din Muhammad of Qandhar.

During his stay in Afghanistan he came to know the differences among the Afghans, and these differences were exploited to bring them under the control of the Sikhs. Both Qandhar and Baluchistan were on the brink of war. The Ghilzais who were the former rulers of Afghanistan had a conflict with the Durranis. Sayyid Ahmad offered his good offices but failed to reconcile their differences. Fully prepared face the strong power of the Sikhs in the Punjab, he marched on November 1826, towards Peshawar and in December 1826 made Naushera his military headquarter. "In 1824 made his appearance among the wild mountaineers of the Peshawar Frontier preaching a holy War against the rich Sikh towns of the Punjab."¹

Keeping in view the basic principles of *Shariat*, he addressed an ultimatum of war to Ranjit Singh with certain conditions. He told them that, "the whole of Afghanistan and India were with the *mujahidin* to whom martyrdom was dearer than wine to the Sikhs."² Ranjit Singh took no notice of this ultimatum. Instead of an answer, he sent a military force under the leadership of Budh Singh.

Battle of Akora :

Sayyid Ahmad and his *mujahidin* were equipped with knives, swords, daggers, pistols and guns. He prepared a list of those who were physically fit and directed them to

¹. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p. 13. Second Edition (London) 1872.

². *Sawanaikh-Ahmadi*, p. 126.

have good weapons.¹ After evening prayer Allah Baksh Khan was called on to teach important tactics of war and was appointed as the commander of the forces. The Sikh forces were under the command of Budh Singh, a cousin of Ranjit Singh. The troops which were seven to ten thousand in number gathered at Akora, sixteen miles away from Naushera. Sayyid Ahmad's forces consisted of three groups such as Hindustanis, Qandharis and a group of people from the neighbouring localities. In the first encounter many Sikhs were killed.² The loss suffered by the *Mujahidin* was of 36 Hindustani and 46 Qandhari lives. The first man who died in this battle was Shaikh Baqar Ali, (Dec. 21, 1824).

This encounter gave *Mujahidin* strength and vigour and served as an eye-opener to the court of Lahore. Budh Singh being disappointed withdrew from Akora. People could at least hope that Sayyid Ahmad would liberate them from Sikh domination. A large number of Pathan Chiefs associated with the struggle. Among them were Khadi Khan of Hund, Ashraf Khan of Zaida and Fathai Khan of Punjtar.

Fighting at Hazro :

Next fighting took place at Hazro, the commercial centre of the Sikhs, in the district of Cambellpur. The main purpose was to destroy the commercial centre of the Sikhs. Khadi Khan made a request to collect all looted property so that it might be distributed according to the wishes of Sayyid Ahmad but discipline was lacking in the ranks of the *Mujahidin*. Some responsible persons of the locality decided to appoint an *Imam* so that there might be greater discipline. The choice fell on Sayyid Ahmad. People performed *bait* of Imam and Khilafat with Sayyid Ahmad. Sardar Yar Muhammad Khan, the then ruler of Peshawar, and Sardar Pir Muhammad Khan accepted his Khilafat through a letter sent to him. The news of his Imam

1. *Letters of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid* (MS.). •

2. Nearly 700 were killed.

spread like any thing in the country.

Now they decided to besiege and attack the fort at Attock, which was strategically very important and if the Sikhs were removed from there, it would have become easy to attack Punjab and overthrow the Sikh power. But the news was secretly conveyed by Khadi Khan and it could not succeed. Under the command of Budh Singh the Sikh force reached the West of the Indus at Seedo near Akora. During this period Lahore court had compromised with the Sardars of Peshawar. In the morning Sayyid Ahmad was poisoned by the servants of Yar Muhammad Khan.¹ In spite of his critical condition, he went with the *mujahidin* to the front. On March 1827 they fought with great zeal, and the superior Sikh military force could do nothing to prevent them from proceeding further. Yar Muhammad Khan who was following the suit of Sayyid Ahmad, decided to desert the movement by joining hands with General Ventura, Raja Sher Singh and General Budh Singh. The struggle which was making satisfactory progress now reached critical stage. Nearly six thousand Muslims were killed. Yar Muhammad Khan because of his treacherous act was nicknamed as 'Yaru Singh'.²

At this time the condition of *mujahidin* was very critical, partly due to cold weather and partly due to lack of food stuff. They either starved or ate the leaves of the trees. But still they continued to face the enemy with confidence and determination. Seeing this condition of the *mujahidin* Ranjit Singh sent a diplomatic mission consisting of Hakim Aziz Uddin and Sardar Wazir Singh to negotiate a compromise. One of the conditions was that Sayyid Ahmad should not proceed further and stop where he was. The official answer was sent by Sayyid Ahmad through Maulvi Khair Uddin Shair Koti and Haji Bahadur Khan. First they met

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1. The people who poisoned him were brought before him, but he forgave them Al-Furqan, 1955, p. 49.
 2. Charles Masson, "*Biluchistan, Afghanistan and the Punjab*," Vol. I, p. 14.

General Ventura, he used his diplomatic cleverness and told them, "when my camp was there in Hazro, I received an ambassador from Sayyid Ahmad who told me if Ranjit Singh would receive the State revenue of Yusuf Zai through Sayyid Ahmad, the military would flourish and would be saved a unnecessary expenses. So I appreciate the idea.¹ In this way he thought that he would take the most difficult task of collecting revenue and opposition would automatically come to an end. Since *Mujahidins* were not after worldly things, they denied it and Maulvi Khairuddin said, "It was all wrong and false ; he had nothing to do with it."²

Undue faith in the sincerity of the Sardars of Peshawar weakened the organization. Further attack was not possible, unless the cooperation of the Sardars was available, but due to social evils their help was no more available. Another most disappointing problem was the opposition within the Muslims. Sayyid Ahmad paid a visit to Yusuf Zai, including Chamla, Dunair and Swat, and after due deliberations and thinking he made his headquarter in Khar. He made an appeal for their unity to put an end to the Sikh rule. He also met with Panjtar tribes (Afridis, Mahmands and Khabils), extended them an invitation to participate in the *jihad* movement. Sulaiman Shah, the ruler of Chitral gave him considerable material help and also wished to participate in the movement.

But since the Durrani were constant source of trouble, another encounter with the Sikhs was difficult. Yar Muhammad Khan left no stone unturned in creating difficulties for Sayyid Ahmad and his untimely opposition greatly affected the cause of *jihad*. Still Sayyid Ahmad prevented a war against Yar Muhammad as he had not come to fight against his Muslim brethren. His principal aim was the emancipation of the Muslims in the North-West and the Punjab from the Sikh domination. But to his surprise when he found Yar

1. *Sawanai-Ahmadi*, p. 119.

2. Muhammad Ikram—*Mauj-i-Kausar*, p. 24.

Muhammad Khan at Utmanzai ready to attack the *mujahidin*; he was forced to attack his lashkar and the fighting continued all day long (1828).

At Panjtar the Sikhs took the initiative. As the mountaneous region was advantageous to the *mujahidin*, they could use many tactics. Though the force was comparatively smaller, he organized in such a way that Ventura thought that they were much more in numbers, and thus he withdrew from the field. Though the success achieved was small it gave the greatest blow to the military leadership of Ventura. Just after it, Sayyid Ahmad paid his attention towards Khadi Khan, who was secretly in alliance with the Sikhs and it led to the battle of Hund which ended in the death of Khadi Khan in 1829.

The death of Khadi Khan at the hands of Sayyid Ahmad brought Yar Muhammad Khan against him afresh. He received the full co-operation of Khadi Khan's relations. Though Ashraf Khan of Zaida had associated himself with the struggle of Sayyid Ahmad, but his elder son, Muqarrab Khan who was related to Khadi Khan, sought to avenge his death. He cooperated with Yar Muhammad Khan and an ultimatum was forwarded to Sayyid Ahmad requiring the immediate vacation of Zaida. The fighting took place between the *Mujahidin* and the combined forces of Yar Muhammad Khan. Yar Muhammad Khan had to leave the field. Nearly three hundred of his supporters were killed, the *Mujahidin* took possession of horses, guns, swords and a number of cannons.

By this time, "The Prophet's influence had now spread as far as Kashmir, and troops from every discontented prince of Northern India flocked to his camp."¹ He now went to Hazara and Kashmir. At Ashra and Amb, Painsa Khan was defeated. When these places were conquered the battle took place with the Sikhs at Phulra. The Sikhs made use of

1. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, second edition (London) 1872, p. 16.

"Hit and run" tactics. In this battle the *Mujahidin* suffered considerably and Sayyid Ahmad Ali, the Sayyid's nephew, and Mir Faiz Ali of Gorakhpur lost their lives.

On the other hand Ranjit Singh organized his forces under the brilliant leadership of Sher Singh, Ventura and Allard. Negotiations through Wazir Singh and Faqir Aziz uddin proved an utter failure as the differences were so vital which could hardly be patched.

Sultan Muhammad Khan encouraged by some of his relatives, prepared himself to avenge his brother's death. The battle of Toru took place and the Durrani suffered heavily. The *Mujahidin* took over Peshawar in 1830, but they did not remove Sultan Muhammad Khan and he was appointed Governor of the city. It was mostly due to the fact that Sultan Muhammad had apologized through Arbab Faiz Ullah Khan for all his acts and promised to practice the Islamic principles in Peshawar. Most of the followers of Sayyid Ahmad were against this act, as they rightly doubted the sincerity of Sultan Muhammad. Maulana Mazhar Ali of Azimabad took over the post of *qazi* in Peshawar and other people were also given some ranks. Wine was prohibited, prostitution was abolished. Sayyid Ahmad himself went to Panjar. But soon after the establishment of Islamic rule in Peshawar the *Mujahidin* were faced with the problem of insincerity of Sultan Muhammad ¹ who had not yet forgotten

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1. When Syed Jafar Ali Naqvi returned home after Balakot episode he met Zaman Shah Durrani in Ludhiyana. The Shah remarked while talking to him, "We felt much aggrieved when Sayyid Sahib gave that country (Peshawar) to those who were disloyal to salt. We understood that His Majesty was a perfect Muslim. He was duped by the dissonant people and gave the country to them. They brought our kingdom to ruin. How could they have been loyal to others. The country would have been given to us. By the will of God there was none to plead us. His Majesty had sunk our memory into the limbo of oblivion." Mehr—*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 274.

to take revenge for his brother. The *Mujahidin* did one mistake ; they at once tried to enforce the Islamic law with strictness, with the result that they soon became unpopular among the masses. For the accomplishment of this task they must have proceeded gradually. Sultan Muhammad Khan took full advantage of the situation and made out a programme to kill Sayyid Mazhar Ali and all the collectors of tithes. The ruthless massacre took place in a single night. It was well planned and could succeed hundred percent. Such mass killing of *Mujahidin* led to organize *jihad* afresh. Sayyid Ahmad left Peshawar and fixed his attention against the Sikhs in Hazara and Kashmir.

In 1830 Sayyid Ahmad established his headquarter at Hazara. A large number of *Mujahidin* with the cooperation of the common men fought against the Sikhs at Bhogarmang and Muzzaffarabad. As during the spring season Rajduwari was not suitable from the strategical point of view, he chose Balakot, because of its immediate nearness to the Kaghan valley and Kashmir. It was the place where the last but memorable battle was fought on the 6th of May 1831, and he laid his life for the mission he stood for.¹

Generals like Ventura and Budh Singh could not deter him but he met his failure at the hands of the Muslims themselves. If the Pathans of Peshawar had cooperated with him, his movement would have succeeded, at least to some extent. The fact that the Sikhs were better equipped cannot be ignored. Ranjit Singh had invited some generals from France and Italy who were experienced in using modern

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1. "Two of his Khalifas from Patna circulated the doctrine that Sayyid Ahmad was not dead, but was merely hiding with a view to reappearance at a suitable time." *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 621. This shows the movement tremendously influenced the Muslim community and they were not prepared to see him dead and in order to continue the movement different theories were widely propagated by his followers.

weapons of war As regards the *Mujahidins* who had come from different parts of the country they were not well equipped. Secondly the insincerity of the Pathans and their inter-tribal rivalries and differences were sufficient to make the movement an utter failure. Even the social atmosphere was not favourable and the rules regarding the marriage of girls caused considerable discontent among the people. It was all due to the single fact that he misunderstood the psychology of the Pathans.

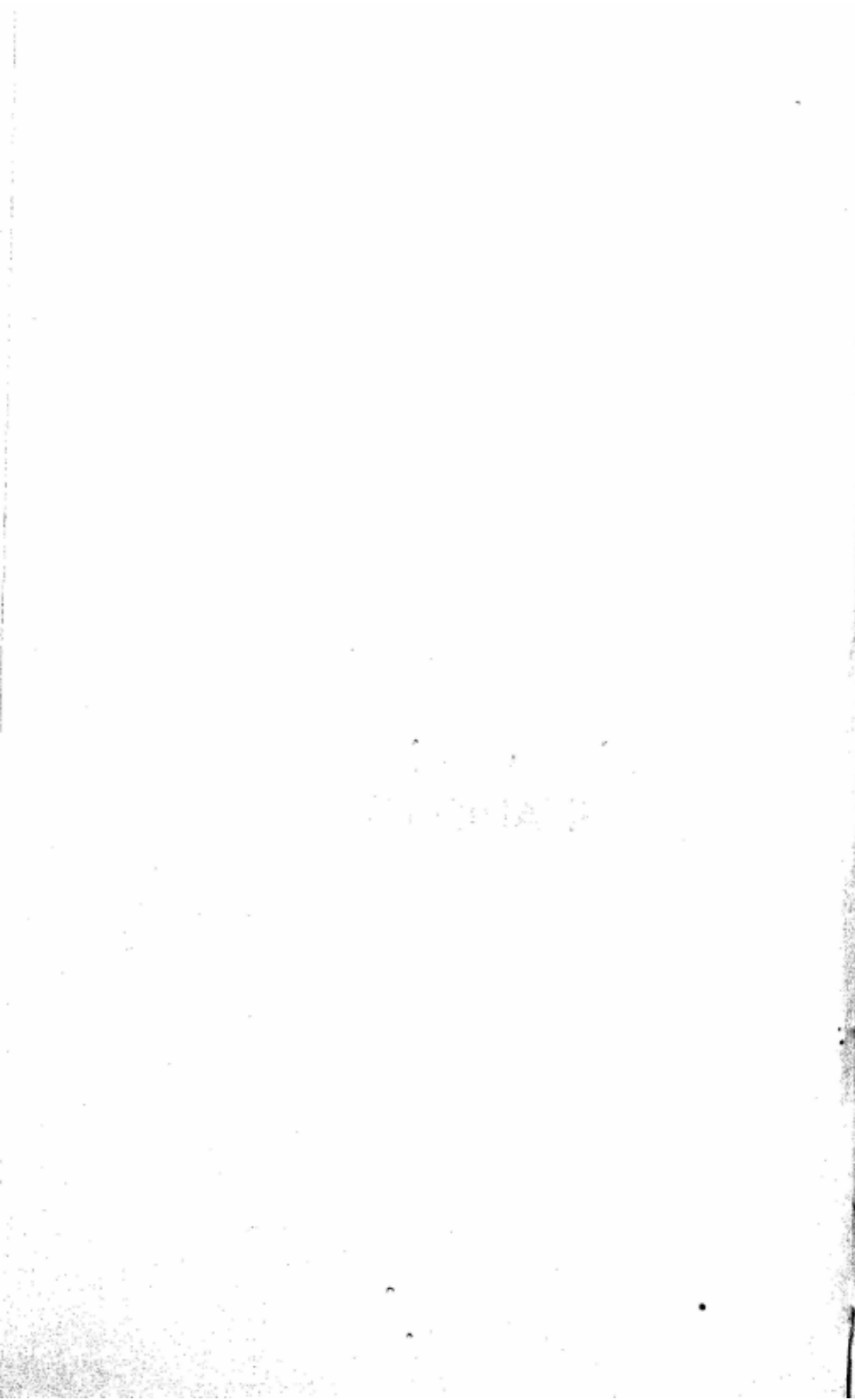
It can not be denied that the prevailing circumstances so greatly affected his life that he spent most of his time in a period of almost unbroken chain of war and he was widely remembered and respected for his honesty, integrity and courage. During the operations of wars and particularly in his last war with the Sikhs at Balakot, he was sure that only his death at this critical juncture could effect what his life had failed to accomplish ; and it was also the completion of that task which his guide and philosopher, Shah Abdul Aziz, because of his physical weakness and old age had left unfinished.

Though his death was a great blow to the movement, it continued with vigour and confidence and later on Sittana in the Swat Valley was made the headquarter for the fulfilment of the aims and objectives, laid down by Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.



CHAPTER V

**SHAH MUHAMMAD ISMAIL
SHAHID (1779-1831)**



CHAPTER V.

SHAH MUHAMMAD ISMAIL SHAHID (1779-1831)

Maulana Muhammad Ismail was one of the most important lieutenants of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. He was born on 29th April, 1779 in Phulat, District Muzaffarnagar.¹ He received his early education from his father, Abdul Ghanī. His father died on 12th April, 1789 when Muhammad Ismail was only ten years old. He was then looked after by his uncle, Shah Abdul Qadir. He completed his study of external sciences at the age of sixteen. It was the period of Akbar Shah II, who was receiving a pension and was a virtual prisoner in the hands of the British. There was a general pessimism and inertia prevailing every where and the fall of the Muslim political power was taken as a fact which needed neither looking into nor any regret by anyone.

Belonging to one of the most venerated families of India, Maulana Muhammad Ismail opened his eyes at a time when disintegration of Muslim power was such a fact. The situation demanded a creative role and a creative leadership on the part of the Muslims. Maulana Ismail Shahid rose up to the need of the time and decided to dedicate his energy for the restoration of Muslim political power in India.

Muhammad Ismail was a keen student of history. Besides, he had also studied geography. Both these things helped him considerably in the organization of his programmes. As a student he had concentrated his attention on a study of the map of India, specially of the Punjab, which was to be the scene of his future activities.

Muhammad Ismail had a close contact with the poor people from the very early years of his life. He was a friend

1. Mirza Hairat—*Hayat-i-Tayyiba*, p. 15 & *Hayat-i-Wali*, p. 353.

and companion of the neglected piece of humanity. While entering into public life the first thing he felt was the necessity of developing military courage and bravery, for the situation revealed that only armed struggle could save Muslim society. Though he happened to be the member of an orthodox family, he developed a wide and progressive outlook. He learnt riding by an expert, Rahim Bakhsh.¹ He used to say that no one under his guidance had learnt all tacts of of riding as he did. After it he learnt boxing from Mirza Rahmat, who had been the instructor almost of all the princes in this art and was second to none in his accomplishments. Muhammad Ismail was also a good swimmer. He could stay continuously in the water for three days. Generally he used to go through Jammuna to Agra from Delhi and come back.² He was also a good marksman and could very easily kill even a little bird on a dense tree. All these activities were being watched by his uncle, Shah Abdul Aziz, whose teachings and thought were influencing the entire Muslim intelligentsia of India at this time. At the age of twenty one he was a complete soldier who had undergone all hardships of life

His visit to the Punjab :

It was the most unfortunate period for the Muslims of the Punjab who were living precarious life under Ranjit Singh. The Islamic rules and regulations were greatly dishonoured, and mosques³ were destroyed and Muslims were forcibly prevented from offering prayers. During Ramzan, the Muslims were forcibly made to take food by the Sikhs. Maulana Muhammad Ismail could not tolerate all these things. As an ordinary man he could go everywhere and talk to people in the Punjab. Even Sikh children seeing a

1. Who later on accompanied him to the frontier and was killed.

2. Mirza Hairat, *Hayat-i-Tayyiba*, p. 31.

3. In the mosques weapons of war were kept. Even today a mosque in Lahore where Shah Ismail had his headquarter for some time is known as "Barood Khana Wali-Masjid."

Muslim used to say "*Swar-da-Bachcha*" "or Young one of bore." Ismail Shahid secretly visited the inns where he could see the helpless people who had lost their wives, children and property. These visits greatly helped him in forming a definite political plan for the Muslims and it may conveniently be regarded as his political tour. He collected all possible data for his political analysis of the situation. He could not receive any help from the Punjabis but he did hope for some help from Afghans and firmly decided to take revenge from the Sikhs for the wrongs done to his Muslim brethren. During his two year's tour of the Punjab, he also prepared the plan and sketches of some of the important forts.

Maulana Ismail now thought of discussing his mission with Sayyid Ahmad Shahid who had by now left the camp of Amir Khan and had come to Delhi. He found in him remarkable courage and sincerity of purpose and decided to launch a movement under his leadership. The Sayyid, on his part, found in Maulana Muhammad Ismail, a true and a devoted lieutenant ready to lay down his life at his command. The burden of dealing with all difficult political affairs fell on his shoulders. He discharged his duties with great courage, tact and ability. In fact, Sayyid Ahmad owed much to the organizing capacity and dedicated spirit of Maulana Ismail. Maulana Muhammad Ismail was also a much gifted orator. In richness of simple reasoning, simplicity of style and dignity of diction, his speeches were difficult to be surpassed. Sayyid Ahmad specially sent Ismail Shahid with Abdul Hai on a country-wide tour to prepare ground for his movement. The tremendous impact of his speeches is clear from some of the observations made by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan in his *Asar-us-Sanadid*.

Ismail Shahid was the true representative of the house of Shah Waliullah and Shah Abdul Aziz and he earnestly desired to reform the religious revival and political ascendancy. The following lines of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad about Ismail Shahid deserve to be quoted as they give an idea of the greatness of the reformer :

"The principles of reform and regeneration of the community which Shah Waliullah could not propound publicly on account of the impatient and tyrannical attitude of the time, and which lay concealed in the ruins of old Delhi and the hospices and seminaries of Kotla, were now openly preached by the great reformer of the period—Ismail Shahid in his public orations on the stairs of the Jama Masjid and he fired the imagination of the people with revolutionary zeal. The influence of his movement crossed the frontiers of India. What people hesitated to talk about even behind closed doors came to be discussed in public and in the streets.¹

His Political Writings :

Apart from his religious writing, there is a pretty definite collection of his political writings. But his political ideas lie scattered in the speeches he delivered from time to time, the letters that he wrote to rulers² and *ulama* and in his book *Mansab-i-Imamat*. According to Hunter, this book was written in order to justify the Imamatus of Sayyid Ahmad. It is one of his excellent writings and consists of 114 pages. The importance and the worth of this book lies in the fact that in this treatise he has given a masterly analysis of the theory of political leadership in Islam. He has completely rejected kingship, as an un-Islamic institution.³ In this outright condemnation of the institution of monarchy he stands without an equal in the history of Islam. Since the rise of monarchy in Islam there has all along been an attempt to present monarchy as an institution legalized by the exigencies of the time. Maulana Ismail looked back at the history of Islam without any prejudice and with a clear and unerring

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1. Quoted by M. Ikram in, *Mauj-i-Kausar*, pp. 34—35.
 2. All important letters addressed by Sayyid Ahmad to different Sardars and *ulema* were written by him.
 3. He considered the (institution) of Monarchy as the greatest curse. "It is a righteous (thing) to root it out and this act is real Islam. It is not the Shariat (religious duty) to obey everyone in authority." *Mansab-i-Imamat*, p. 98.

vision and found the whole institution of kingship a negation of the true spirit of Islam. He transfers suzerainty to the Muslim people and in this respect he introduces a progressive element in Muslim political thought. He remarks :

“The politics of Islam and the politics of kings are as different as sweet and saltish waters, should the two be mixed it would obviously be the sweet water which would lose its taste.”

For the power and strength of his mission, for the inspiration of his teaching, and for its effect upon future generations and developments, Ismail Shahid stands out prominently as a great master of political thought and activity. He uncovered vital truths and foresaw important developments that were hidden from his contemporaries.

Actual Struggle .

For a long time Ismail Shahid worked side by side with Sayyid Ahmad. In fact he was the brain of the movement. In all the battles which were fought at the frontier, he played a major part. Many battles under his command were successful. After due preparations, and on his advice, Sayyid Ahmad paid a secret visit to Thanesar to give information about his mission and toured Malir Kotla, Mamdoot, Bahawal Pur, Hyderabad, Sind, Shikarpur, Jagain, Khan Garh, Dara-i-Bolan, Qandahar, and Kabul, and all the informations given to him by Ismail Shahid proved correct in the long run.

He was the commander-in-chief of Mujahidin forces. Through the Khaiber Pass he reached Peshawar and from here via Yusufzai he reached Khuwaishgi, from where he could easily study the strength of the Sikhs. He spread a net of spies to collect information about the military strength of the Sikhs. At this stage he was greatly helped by his maps, which he had drawn during his private visit to the Punjab. Sardar Muhammad Khan, the younger brother of Amir Dost Muhammad Khan, himself came to Khuwaishgi and offered his services to him.

At the first battle of Akora (Dec. 1826), Ismail Shahid directed all the forces and ultimately the battle was won due to his strategic planning.

Ismail Shahid was not in favour of attacking Hazro and consequently it proved a hopeless adventure. After this incident of indiscipline Ismail Shahid decided to prepare a ground for the *Imamat* of Sayyid Ahmad.¹ Not only the Punjabi Maulvis but also the Indian *ulema* sent their views for appointing Sayyid Ahmad as the Imam.

The letter which Ismail Shahid addressed to Budh Singh is the best example of his farsightedness, political ability and experience. It runs as follows :

“From :—

The Commander of the faithful, Sayyid Ahmad Sahib, in reply to the letter of Sardar Budh Singh, the Chief of the armies of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

“In the name of God, the merciful and the clement. From the side of the leader of the faithfuls, it should not remain concealed to the heart, leavened with magnificence of the general of the troops and armies, the owner of the treasures and offices, compriiser of the dominion and the politics, comprehender of the grandeur and the government, skilled in the arts of sword and Warfare, with a banner of magnitude, Sardar Budh Singh, may God lead him to the right path and cause to rain upon him the cloud of Divine guidance, that their letter full of eloquence, comprising an expression of fortitude and ingenuity reached here. The statements mentioned in it became evident. It seems that they did not understand fully what we intend by these efforts and struggles and that is why they have written the said letter.

“Now they should listen to it carefully and should understand the purpose of it with perfect attention — that

1. Ismail Shahid declared that if anyone challenged the *Imamat* of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid will be treated as traitor to Islam. *Mirza Hairat*. p. 21.

the differences with the government and the State are based on different reasons. Some of the people intend to acquire riches and power through it, others wish to make a show of their bravery while some desire only to acquire the rank of martyrdom, but we need some thing different, and that is only to obey the commands of our Lord, the real Master and the most worthy King, which is revealed in the Prophet Muhammad's religion.

"God the magnificent and most exalted is a witness to the fact that no motive from among the sensual motives except the said objective, is in our minds in these Warfares. No other desire comes to our lips or arises in our heart.

"So in the defence of the religion of Prophet Muhammad I perform every act in such a way that it is useful for this purpose; and if God, the most exalted, wishes I will continue to remain busy in this very effort till the time of my death and will spend the whole of my life in it. So long as I am alive I will continue to follow this path and will try to reach my desired destination. So long there are hands and feet, there is the very path to travel and the same ambition to gain. Either I become an insolvent or a rich one, people accuse me of cowardice or name with ingenuity, I attain a noble status or the rank of a martyr but (what ever the result may be) if I think that the acquiescence of my Lord depends upon this very fact that I should come, in the arena, alone with my own life, I will certainly do so and for God's sake I will stand with my whole heart, in the foremost rank without flinching. I will enter into the congregations of the armies without any doubt and fear.

"In these words, I do not desire to make a show of my fortitude or to acquire riches and the evidence of this fact is that if any one of the great leaders and the high ranking chief accepts the religion of Prophet Muhammad, I will praise his manliness with all my heart and soul and will have good wishes for his state, and dominion. Not only this but I will also put in numerous efforts for the rapid development

and progress of his state. If I do contrary to it, I will be blamed for that.

"If they think over it realistically, they will come to know that in this matter I am not to be accused or blamed at all, because when that magnificent chief (Budh Singh) cannot offer any excuse or apology in obeying the orders of his rulers though he (the ruler) is one of their persons, rather one of their brothers, how is it possible to offer an excuse in obeying the commands of the strongest while that Exalted One is not only the creator of all human being but the Creator of the entire Universe.

May peace be on those who follow the right path." ¹

Budh Singh, however, did not give any reply to his letter but started preparations for war. At this critical juncture Ismail Shahid warned Sayyid Ahmad not to try to obtain help of the natives, who had in previous incidents sufficiently proved their character. In this battle he fought with such a bravery that the Sikhs left even their cannon on the field.

The battle in which General Ventura was commanding the Sikh forces is historically most important. Ventura had promised Ranjit Singh that he would bring Sayyid Ahmad and Ismail Shahid alive to the court. But to his surprise Ismail Shahid was victorious and thus Ventura's prestige vanished.

Ismail Shahid as an intelligent general was always alert even when there was complete peace and security, and he made his principle not to sleep unarmed. He made Amb and Kashmir his headquarter and made the best use of his resources. It was this prudence and courage which saved the life of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid at Shaidu. At the battle of Shinkari, he received several bullet wounds but he did not leave the ground till the battle had ended in his favour.

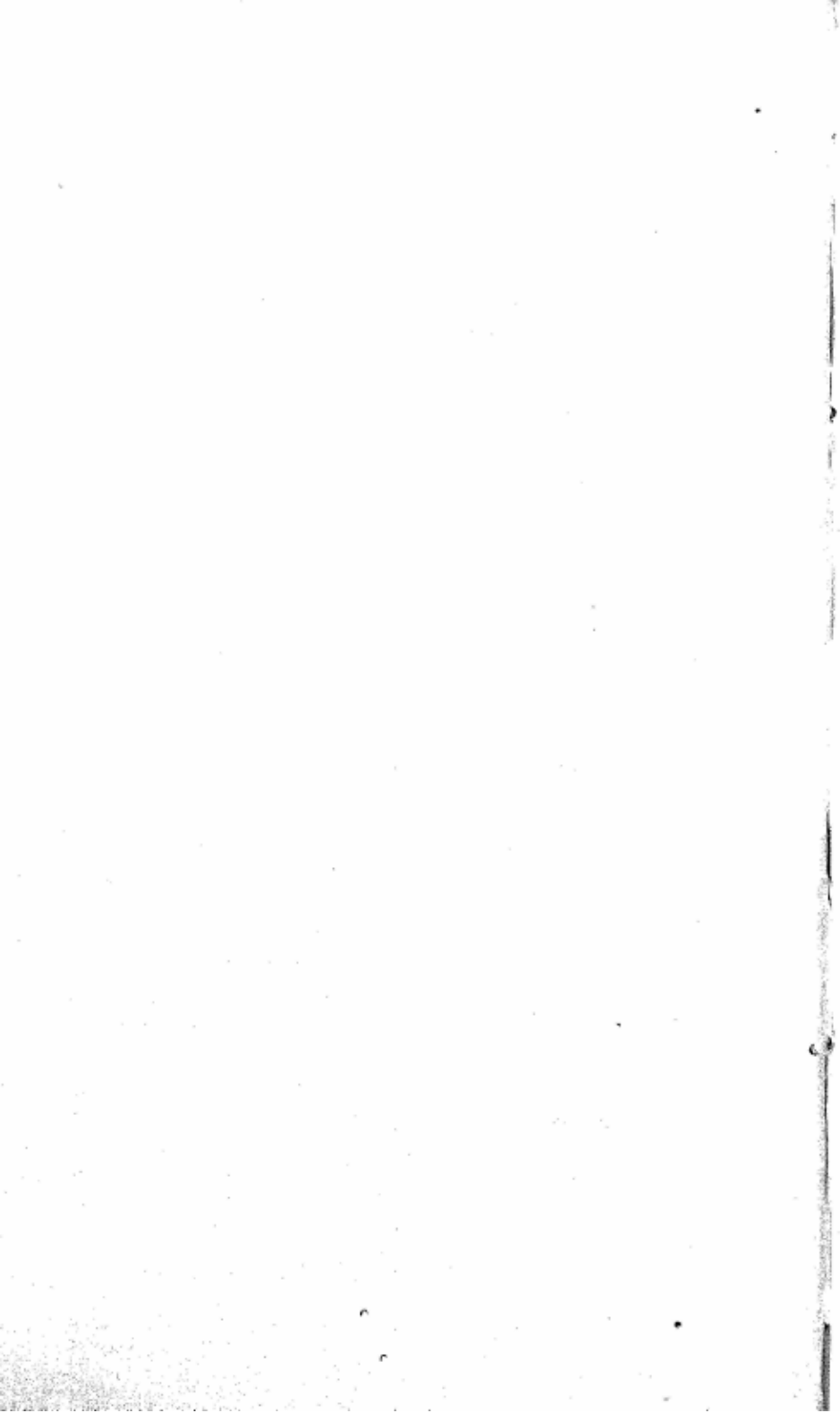
1. Letter quoted by Mirza Hairat - in his *Hayat-i-Tayyiba*, p. 166. This letter was written in the Month of Jamadus Sani 1242 A. H./1826.

At the battle of Zaida, with only seven hundred men, he gave a crushing defeat to an army of nearly 10,000 Durrani. The battles of Amb and Ashra are examples of his military ability and organizing capacity.

The Conquest of Peshawar :

The continuous victory of the Mujahidin greatly impressed the Sardars of Peshawar. All the negotiations regarding a compromise were conducted by Shah Ismail. With his approval Sayyid Ahmad marched towards Peshawar. The ruler himself surrendered and handed over Peshawar to him. In Peshawar orders were issued to stop the consumption of wine and opium and prostitution was abolished. But soon due to the insincerity of Sardars, Peshawar was lost. This loss was a great blow to the movement of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Ismail Shahid.

While Sayyid Ahmad and Muhammad Ismail were at Balakot, Ranjit Singh sent Sher Singh with an army of 20,000 Sikhs to destroy them. The full strength of the Mujahidin was only 900. Shah Ismail rightly thought that it was the last battle and he fought with the zeal of a martyr. Both Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Ismail Shahid died fighting at Balakot on May, 1831. Those who could escape death went to Sittana and from there continued to trouble the British for a very long time. Sir Sayed Ahmad Khan who wrote his *Asar-us-Sanadid* in 1847, some 14 years after the tragedy of Balakot, says that till that time groups of volunteers used to visit Balakot and they kept the memory of Sayyid Ahmad and Ismail Shahid as green as ever.



CHAPTER VI

**THE FARAIZI MOVEMENT
(1804–1860)**

CHAPTER VI

THE FARAIZI MOVEMENT (1804—1860)

In Bengal the position of the Muslims from every point of view—religious, political and economic, was precarious. Due to the absence of suitable religious and secular education they had become utterly illiterate, superstitious¹ and obscurantists. Even Hunter sensed this situation and observed : “A century ago (i.e. in the 18th century) Muhammadanism seemed to be dying of inanition in Bengal.”² This situation could only be realised after the Britishers had completely taken over the control of the country.

The people of Bengal greatly suffered at the hands of the foreign power due to their political and commercial monopoly. The land reform of 1793 destroyed their handicrafts and left Muslims economically crippled and physically exhausted. This was undoubtedly the most critical and unfortunate period of their history. The following lines from Hunter throw light on the miserable plight of the Muslims, then living in Bengal. He says :

“I have seldom read anything more piteous than the private letters and newspaper articles of Bengal Musalmans. The Calcutta Persian paper (*Durban*, 14th July, 1869) sometimes ago wrote thus, “All sorts of employment great and small are being gradually

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1. “On his (Shari’at Allah) promulgating a dogma that to allow a mid-wife to cut the navel cord of a new born babe was a deadly sin borrowed from the Hindus, and his insisting that it was the duty of the father to do this, he roused a spirit of opposition which caused many of his adherents to fall away.” *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*—London, p. 99.

2W. W. Hunter : *England’s work in India*, p. 47.

snatched away from the Muhammadans, and bestowed on men of other races, particularly the Hindus. The Government is bound to look upon all classes of its subjects with an equal eye, yet the time has now come when it publicly singles out the Muhammadans in its Gazettes for exclusion from official post. Recently when several vacancies occurred in the office of Sundarbans Commissioners, that official, in advertising them in the Government Gazette stated that the appointments would be given to none but Hindus. In short, the Muhammadans have now sunk so low, that, even when qualified for government employment, they are studiously kept out of it by Government notifications. Nobody takes any notice of their helpless condition, and the higher authorities do not deign even to acknowledge their existence.”¹ Further he says, “A hundred and seventy years ago it was almost impossible for a well-born Musalman in Bengal to become poor, at present it is almost impossible for him to continue rich.”²

It was under these circumstances that Shariat Ullah started his movement in Bengal and for several decades kept the British authorities in great suspense and anxiety. Shariat Ullah who became later on a great figure in the public life of Bengal, rose to the occasion and laid the foundation of Faraizi movement in 1804. Not much is known about his early life. He was born of obscure parents in parganah Bandar Khola, district Faridpur in 1764 A. D. At the age of nearly eighteen he went to Mecca. According to one information he studied with al-Shaikh Tahir as-Sanbal-al-Makki and came back after a long period of twenty years.³ His long stay in Mecca brought him under the influence of the

1. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans* p. 175.

2. Ibid, p. 158.

3. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, II, p. 47.

Wahhabis, who were fighting against all innovations and deviations from early Islam. But there is lack of authoritative historical evidence to prove that he was really influenced by the Wahhabi ideology. As a matter of fact, he was a student of Meccan divines who did not like the Wahhabi ideology at all.

Shariat Ullah wanted the people to give up un-Islamic practices and to follow the original teachings of Islam as demanded by Prophet Muhammad. On his call they left all such practices and became the true follower of God's Commandments i.e. *Faraiz*. First of all he advised the people to repent for all their past sins and then to follow *faraiz* or duties. They became very particular and strict about their religious duties (*faraiz*). James Taylor says that they were stricter in their morals than their other Mohammedan brethren.¹ Consequently on this doctrine of *Faraiz* developed largely the movement which came to be called the *Faraizi Movement*. To quote Taylor again, "They (the Faraizis) profess to adhere :

"To the strict letter of Koran and they reject all ceremonies that are not sanctioned by it..... the commemoration of the martyrdom of Hasan and Husain.....is not only forbidden but even witnessing the ceremonies connected with it, are avoided by them. They reject the rites of *Puttoo*, *Chuttee* and *chilla* which are performed between the first and the fortieth day after the birth of a child and observe the rites of 'aqiqa' In the same way they have divested the marriage ceremony of its formalities The funeral obsequies are conducted with a corresponding degree of simplicity, offering of fruits and flowers at the grave are not raised above the surface of the ground nor marked by any building or

1. James Taylor : *Topography*, p. 248. *

brick or stone. The Ferazees have the character of being stricter in their morals than their Muhammadan brethren, but they are inclined to intolerance and persecution, and in showing their contempt of the religious opinions of their neighbours, they frequently occasion affrays and disturbances in their town.”¹

Haji Shariat Ullah came to Bengal in the beginning of the 19th century and gave birth to an agrarian movement with the help of the downtrodden Muslim peasants, workers, and artisans. In order to remove the inherent weakness of inferiority complex from Muslim minds, he lived with them as one of them and soon became their guide and leader, determined to bring them out from darkness to light. In addition to this he also gave up the title of *Pir* and *Murid* and preferred to be called *ustad* or teacher. He said that the relationship of *pir* and *murid* was responsible for undermining human personality and its development. He made them conscious of their own place in the society and made them strict adherents of *Faraiz* or duties.² He began to work in 1802. “For several years Shariat Ullah quietly promulgated his newly framed doctrines in the villages of his native district; encountering much opposition and abuse, but attracting a band of devoted adherents, he by degrees acquired the reputation of a holy man,”³ and his authority became unchallenged and nobody dared to ignore his wishes and orders.

Shariat Ullah mainly concentrated his energy in wiping out the capitalists, both the Hindus and British alike, who were exploiting the economic resources of the country. And therefore, the movement could get the unprecedented support from the uneducated peasantry, the weavers and several other Muslims of Dacca, Faridpur, Jessore and Bakarganj. Probably it was due to this that Shariat Ullah was sometimes

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1. James Taylor, pp. 248—250.
 2. Karamat Ali, *Nasimul-Harmyn*, I, 160.
 3. *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, p. 99.

called "Pir of the Julaha." James Wise's¹ contention that he was a son of a weaver is quite wrong as he was the son of a Taluqdar.²

The Zamindars were very much afraid of this new agrarian movement, which brought the Muslim peasantry together as one man. Soon, as is usual with great reformers and thinkers differences arose and Shariat Ullah was forcibly removed from Nawabari, in the Dacca district, where he had settled and was forced to return to his birth place. There he was regarded as the minister of faith and won the sympathies of uneducated class of the Muhammadans. He promulgated rules and regulations which were carried out and obeyed without any excuse to the remotest corner of the country. He performed his task in his most difficult hours, with dignity, intelligence and due caution.

When India passed into the complete sovereignty of the foreigners, a discussion arose whether India was still a *Dar-ul-Islam*. They consulted Shah Abdul Aziz of Delhi who gave a Fatwa and said that "when infidels get hold of a Muslim country and it becomes impossible for the Muslims of the country, and of the people of the neighbouring districts, to drive them away or to retain reasonable hope of ever doing so; and the power of the infidels increases to such an extent that they can abolish or retain the ordinances of Islam according to their wishes; and no one is strong enough to seize on the revenues of the country without the permission of the infidels; and the Muslim inhabitants do no longer live so secure as before ; such a country is politically a country of the Enemy." So was the condition in Bengal in the beginning of the 19th century and consequently Shariat Ullah declared India *Dar-ul-Harb* or the land of the enemy and, to be more practical, prevented the offering of the Id and Friday prayers in the territory of Bengal. In the word of Hunter :

1. James Wise : *Eastern Bengal*, p. 22. *

2. J. E. Gastrell : *Jessore, Freedpur and Backergunge*, p. 36.

"The articles of faith on which he (Shariat Ullah) chiefly insisted were the duty of the holy war (*Jihad*), the sinfulness of infidelity (*Kufr*), or introducing rites and ceremonies into worship (*Bida't*), and of giving partnership to the one God (*Shirk*)."¹

In 1867 while Khalifa Abdul Jabbar at Barisol was lecturing, it was suggested that in the light of the Meccan fatwa an Imam should be appointed under the British regime. In reply to this he said to a police officer, "If we appoint an Imam you would put handcuff on our hands."² It can be inferred from it that the Faraizi were afraid of the British and did not have the courage to discuss the status of India publicly. Therefore they did not come into direct conflict with them like the Wahhabis, "whose zeal is greater than their knowledge (and who) deduce from the fact of India being technically a country of the enemy, the obligation to wage war upon its rulers."³ The only fact that they prevented the congregational prayer, is sufficient to believe that they regarded India under the British rule as '*Dar-ul-Harb*'.

Though Shariat Ullah declared India *Dar-ul-Harb*, he did not lay down any revolutionary principle like that of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and did not take any direct action against the British.⁴ A critical study and analysis of the Faraizi movement will show that its followers did not only oppose the Friday prayers but were also deadly against the administrative changes brought about by the English, whose policies and attitudes were not conducive to the health of the Muslim Society. And his declaration for not performing Jumah prayer,⁵ undoubtedly contains the germs of political regeneration of his countrymen.

1. W. W. Hunter, ed. *Imperial Gazetteer of India*, Vol. IV, p. 399.

2. Maulvi Karamat Ali : *Hujjat-i-Qati*, p. 104.

3. W. W. Hunter, *The Indian Musalmans*, pp. 142-43.

4. Karamat Ali, *Hajjat-i-Qawaish*, pp. 43-8, *Nasim-ul-Harmayn*, p. 166.

5. *District Gazetteer Faridpur*, p. 39.

From fear of a revolt against the cruel attitude of Hindu landlords and the British, his activities were strictly watched, and for some time was kept under the supervision of the police for exciting his disciples in the country to withhold the payment of revenue. But, "he acted with great prudence and caution, rarely assuming any other character than that of a religious reformer,"¹ and tactfully refrained from declaring war against the Britishers.

After the death of Shariat Ullah, Faraizi leadership passed into the hands of his son, Muhammad Muhsin (1819-1860), popularly known Dudhu Mian, who considerably differed from his father in thought as well as in action. Born in 1819, he went to Mecca in the prime of his life and began to preach the principles of his father as well as of his own newly-framed doctrines. Though originally the movement was a religious one, yet Dudhu Miyan through his well thought out socio-economic programme made it a political movement and was greatly supported by the oppressed majority of Eastern Bengal and Assam. He brought to the front the social, religious, economic and political problems, which were constantly troubling their minds and were hindering their progress due to the domination of the foreign power. He brought dynamism to the movement and it became somewhat aggressive as he openly planned to reform socio-economic system of Bengal. His name became a household word throughout the districts of Faridpur, Pubna, Bakirgandi, Decca and Noakhali and his mighty voice in defence of peace and economic prosperity penetrated in every corner of India. He revitalized the whole programme and made Faraizi movement more effectively organized and again revived the *Pir-system*, which was a marked deviation from the teachings of his father. One of the most remarkable achievements of his administrative ability was the establishment of an effective reorganisation of society. He divided

1. "Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam, p. 99."

Eastern Bengal into circles and appointed a Khalifa to each and gave them power to collect funds for the progress of the movement so that it may become a force within their respective spheres. Soon he became the acknowledged leader with the timely support of peasants, workers, and craftsmen, whose cause he advanced with heart and soul. His pure and simple preaching of equality was greatly responsible for winning the heart of the common man. Dudhu Miyan could show his indomitable courage when he took very stern action against the levying of illegal cesses by landlords. He went a step further by declaring that all land belongs to Almighty God and no one had a legitimate right to levy taxes upon it and continued to oppose land-tax tooth and nail. This bold stand inevitably led to wide-spread discontentment among the landlords and indigo planters who came with daggers drawn, as it posed a direct challenge to their influence and authority. It is said that not a chest of indigo reached England without being stained with human blood.¹ They gave a warning to the tenants asking them not to join the movement; if they did so, they were mercilessly punished by them. Dudhu Miyan was falsely charged with abetting the plunder of several houses in 1841 and was also committed to the session on the charge of murder; but he was acquitted as there was lack of sufficient evidence to prove the case. In this way the landlords tried to give repeated blows to his towering personality, but hopelessly failed as it had now become a mass movement and had gathered such a momentum that these false charges only helped in strengthening the movement, as everybody found in his teachings a promise for a better future. And, "their efforts to implicate him in different legal cases totally failed to brow-beat him."²

Apart from all this, when his popularity reached its highest peak, he undertook the task of removing the differ-

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1. Nil Darpan by Din Bandhu Mitra, *The Dewan Society*, Magazine, Calcutta, July, 1905.
 2. *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam*, pp. 99-100.

ence himself and organized independent courts for the administration of justice. "Any one daring to take cases to the British courts was dealt with by social penalties." ¹ People were sent with his orders to distant villages and he signed his letters, "Ahmad nam na malum" (Ahmad of unknown name). Every Hindu and Muslim, obeyed his orders which were carried to every village as they suited the needs of the common man. The common people extended their full support to him both in men and material. He was well informed about every activity going on against him as he had spread a net of spies throughout the country. He successfully exploited the situation for the advantage of the movement and made repeated appeals to the Muslims to join it. This attitude resulted into direct clash between the zimindars and Dudhu Miyan. After a considerable struggle, they took him to Alipur jail as a state prisoner. ² And the revolt of 1857 brought him to Bahadurpur; where he breathed his last on 24th September 1860 and was buried there.

Next to Dudhu Miyan in Bengal was an equally important reformer, Maulvi Karamat Ali who died in 1873. He was inspired by the teachings of Shah Wali Ullah and his son Shah Abdul Aziz. But he differed from their political aims and objectives and denied that India was *Dar-ul-Harb* and gave a great blow to the movement. He helped Maulvi Abdul Latif Khan, the then Secretary of the Mohammadan Literary Association of Calcutta, who tried to get rid of the political controvercies of the day.

But the Faraizi movement severely suffered when Dudhu Miyan was taken as state prisoner and the movement gradually faded from the political scene. However it cannot be denied that the movement was the direct reflection of social, religious, economic and political problems which exercised the minds of the Muslims of Bengal after the decay and dis-

1. Chaudhri, *Civil disturbances in India*, p. 11,

2. *JASBL"XIII, pp. 81-82,

integration of the Muslim political authority. It was by and large the result of Wahhabi movement, which tremendously influenced Indian Muslim political outlook. In 1834, the Faraizi movement became so widespread that the Government appointed a special Committee to enquire into its activities. A letter written by the head of the Bengal police dated 1843 says :

“That a single one of their preachers had gathered together some eighty thousand followers who asserted complete equality among themselves, looked upon the cause of each as that of the whole sect, and considered nothing criminal if done in behalf of a brother in distress.”¹

1. Letter, No. 1001, dated 13th May 1843, and No. 50 of 1847; from the commissioner of Police for Bengal, Anoted by Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p. 100.

CHAPTER VII

ON THE EVE OF 1857



CHAPTER VII

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The Britishers were now completely and politically speaking the masters of India. The Mughals, "were like Rhine land imperial knights trying to maintain ancient splendour on an income many times too small."¹ They could not maintain the honour, the dignity and the authority of the Mughal Empire any more. They were mere tools in the hands of unscrupulous ministers.²

Due to the lack of foresight and discipline, power slipped from the hands of the Muslims. The efforts of Shah Waliullah, whose nature rebelled against the concentration of wealth in a few hands and the foreign rule, and the victory of Ahmad Shah Abdali could not restore Muslim power and prestige. Even the fruits of victory at the battle field of Panipat were reaped by the victors of Plassey. The British considered compromise with the Muslims as dangerous because it could lead to the revival of their political ambitions. They suppressed and ignored the Muslims more than the Hindus.³ A time came when every citizen of India was discontented and desperate on account of the British attempts at the extension of their sphere of political authority by all means, fair or foul. The various policies—Doctrine of Lapse, which rendered all native powers completely desperate and disgusted, Subsidiary Alliances etc. which caused discontentment and distrust throughout the country—

1. Percival Spear, *Twilight of the Mughals*, p. 61.

2. C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals of the English in Bengal*, Vol. II, Part I, p. 111.

3. "in fact, there is now scarcely a Government office in Calcutta in which a Muhammadan can hope for any post above the rank of porter, messenger, filler of inkpots, and mender of pens." *The Indian Musalmans*, p. 170.

were calculated to establish British hegemony in India. The struggle of 1857 constitutes a milestone in the political and economic history of India, as it marks the beginning of a collective effort on the part of the Hindus and the Muslims to oust the British from India and get rid of foreign domination. All the miseries, oppression and disaffection caused by the policies of the British were revealed in the Mutiny of 1857. They interfered in the day-to-day affairs of Hindus and Muslims and it was widely thought that Lord Canning had been appointed to convert India to Christianity.

The Mutiny of 1857 was a country-wide struggle to throw away the British completely from the Indian soil. It was not simply a sepoy mutiny due to catridge, but was a spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings and revolt against the religious, social, military and political policies of the British. It is significant that even those powers which were opposed to the Mughal Emperor — the Marathas, for instance — gathered round the Mughal Emperor in order to organize a movement against the British occupation of the country. Every community except the Sikhs and the Parsis, actively participated in it. The participation of the Rani Lakshmi Bai, Nana Sahib, Nahir Singh, Hazrat Mahal, Nawab Ali Bahadur, Nawab Taffazul Husain, Khan Bahadur Khan, Nawab Mahmood Khan etc., gave life to the movement. Muslim ulema like Maulana Ahmad Ullah Shah, Haji Imdad Ullah, Maulana Mohammad Qasim Nanautvi, Maulana Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, Maulana Faiz Ahmad Badayuni, Maulana Liaqat Ali, Maulana Fazal Haque Khairabadi and Maulana Abdul Qadir Ludhianwi participated in it. They had no personal grudge against the British but were the symbol of patriotism and hostility to the foreign rule in India. They were so popular among the masses, that at a time when once Maulvi Ahmad Ullah Shah was addressing a gathering of ten thousand people, the magistrate ordered the police man to arrest him but he refused to do so.¹

1. *Musalmano-ka-Roshan Mustakbil*, p. 8.

The Wahhabis whose activities were always looked upon with acute suspicion and resentment by the Britishers were constantly busy for the political and economic emancipation of the country. The Wahhabi slogan of '*jihad*' from the time of Shah Abdul Aziz had prepared the soil for the outbreak of the movement of 1857.¹ The people left responsible posts and joined hands with the Wahhabis. After the death of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid in 1831, they strengthened their contact with the important Muslim centres such as the Deccan, like Hyderabad, Mysore and also with some of the states of central India and Rajputana such as Bhopal, Tonk and Jaipur etc.

By 1857 every part of India had organized enthusiastic camps of the Wahhabis and these camps were waiting for a chance to rise against the British Raj. Hunter's analysis, despite the rebuttal of Sir Sayyid Ahmad remains absolutely correct that the Wahhabis had created and nourished the anti-British feeling which expressed in the upheaval of 1857. It was the faith created by them which led to the temporary capture of Delhi and the emergence of Bahadur Shah, who was eighty two at this time as the leader of the struggle. Lack of discipline and equipment and ignorance of the new methods of warfare, and above all the absence of a dynamic leadership led to the failure of the Indians. Bahadur Shah was arrested and sent to Rangoon far away from his beloved city — Delhi. To quote Spear he was, "a halo of martyrdom and an aura of romantic sympathy collected round the aged figure who would otherwise have been regarded as an unfortunate play thing of destiny".² His two sons were shot dead

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1. Prof. Majumdar's opinion that in 1857 the "Wahhabis" did not take part is purged of reality. (*The Sepoy Mutiny* p. 37). There is no dearth of reliable historical material which goes contrary to his opinion. The several punishment meted out to the Wahhabis by the Britishers sufficiently highlights their participation in and impact on the movement of 1857.
 2. Percival Spear—*Twilight of the Mughals*, p. 226.

by the commander, Hodson. Both Hindus and Muslims were mercilessly killed. 'In the city (Delhi) no man's life was safe, all able-bodied men who were seen were taken for rebels and shot.' ¹

The 'Mutiny' was crushed by an iron hand by the British. The main sufferers were the Muslims who, on no account were prepared to lose political power. "The truth is" remarks Hunter," that when the country passed under our rule, the Musalmans were the superior race, and superior not only in stoutness of heart and strength of arm, but in power of political organization and in the science of practical government. Yet the Muhammadans are now shut out equally from Government employment and from the higher occupation of non-official life." ² So also in the view of Harrington Thomas that educationally, intellectually and morally Muslims were far superior to Hindus and possessed far more ability to manage affairs of the State than anybody else. ³ But the British were determined to crush the Muslims. Jawaharlal Nehru has correctly observed :

"After 1857 the heavy hand of the British fell more on the Muslims than on the Hindus. They considered the Muslims more aggressive and militant, possessing memories of recent rule in India, and therefore more dangerous." ⁴

The Faraizi movement and the Wahhabi movement which were launched to restore peace and to regain political power ended in the catastrophe of 1857. In fact it was in 1857 and not 1831, that the Wahhabi and other movements came to an end. All hopes in future were now lost. Many Muslim leaders, like Haji Imdad Ullah who had actively participated in the struggle of 1857, migrated to Mecca.

1. *Two Native Narrations*, p. 71, Narrative of Mainodin.

2. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Musalmans*, p. 171.

3. *Indian Mutiny and our Future Policy*, pp. 13-17.

4. Jawaharlal Nehru, *An Autobiography*, p. 460.

Some of the remaining leaders like Mufti Karim of Delhi and Munshi Inayat Ahmad of Lucknow were sent after the Ambala and Patna trials of 1865 and 1869 to Andamans.

The Muslims continued to be the victims for many years after the Mutiny. The only tangible change in the policy occurred in 1870 when in the opinion of the British statesmen, the Muslim political movements had practically come to an end. The people who kept themselves aloof from the independence struggle and had acquired the knowledge of English, directed their energy to reorganise the Muslim society on a new basis without participating in political movements. It was due to this attitude that Nawab Abdul Latif (1828-1893) of Calcutta laid down the foundation of the Muhammadan Literary and Scientific Society in 1863. He said that the condition of the Muslims demanded concentration on social and educational programmes. He also received *fatwas* from different authorities in which it was categorically stated that India was not *Dar-ul-Harb*. The British government also changed its policy towards the Muslims, when the Hindus began to criticise the Government and several movements among them began to take shape. These movements aroused suspicion in the minds of the British. Muslims were now given due importance and were helped so that they could improve their economic and educational standards.¹

During this most crucial period in the history of the Muslims of India, Sayyid Jamal-uddin Afghani² paid a

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1. "The figures revealed that as compared with one hundred thousand Hindus there were only fourteen thousand Muslim students. It was therefore decided to open new schools for the Muslims and, encourage them by scholarships." Major Basu, *India Under the Crown*, pp. 128-29.
 2. "The greatest Egyptian reformer of the nineteenth century was Jamal Uddin Afghani, a religious leader who sought to modernize Islam by reconciling it with modern conditions. He preached that all progress could be reconciled with Islam." Jawaharlal Nehru—*Glimpses of World History*, p. 609.

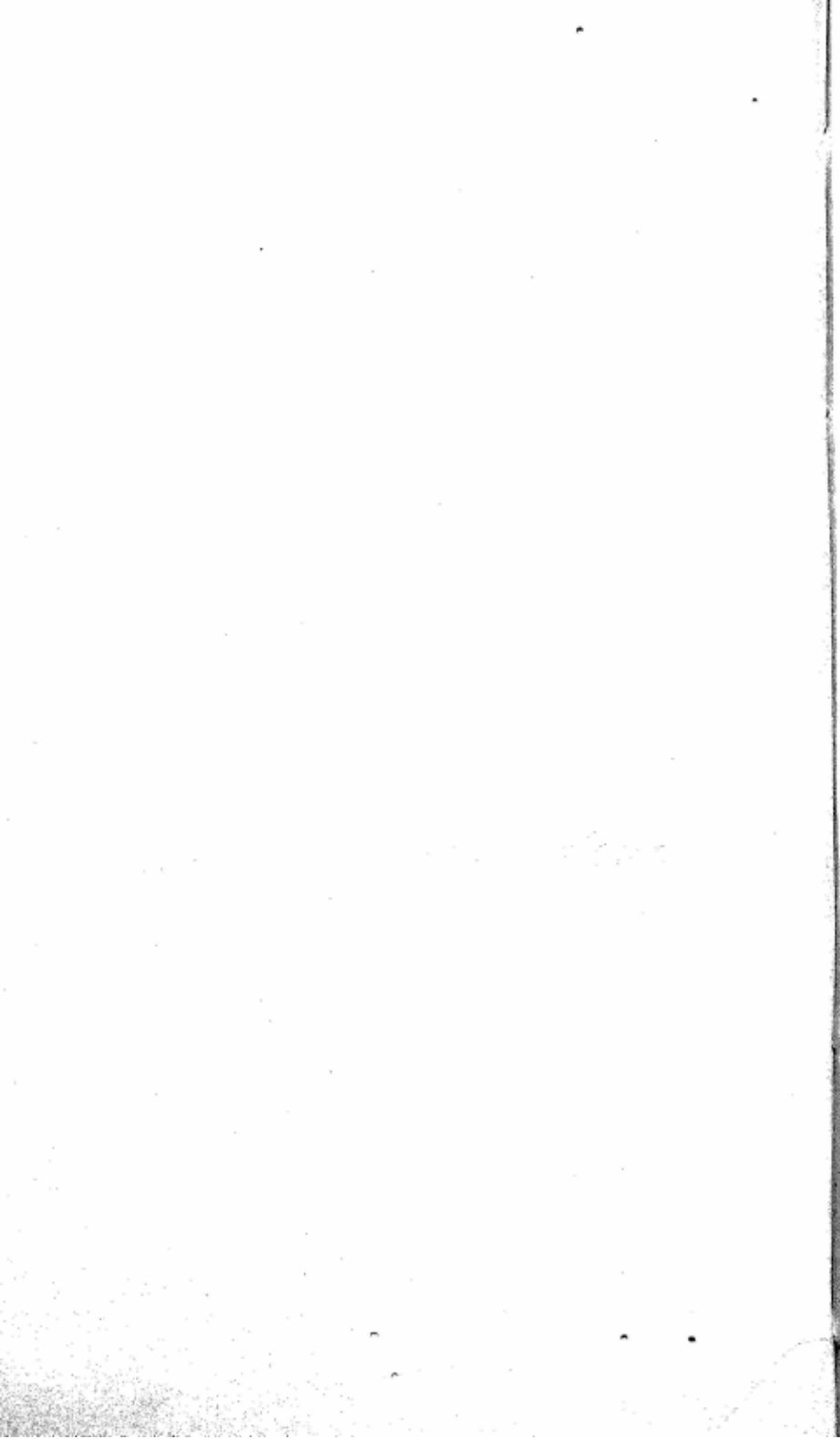
visit to India in 1879 and resented the political compromise between the Muslims and the British. But he was rather harsh and mistaken in his assessment. The Muslims were never in favour of English rule and, at least from the time of Shah Abdul Aziz, there were feelings against the British. Sayyid Ahmad Shahid and Ismail Shahid wanted to launch a powerful movement against the English. In 1857 the Muslims were the chief culprits in the eyes of the British. Even Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was not left unaffected and he said, "At this time I could not imagine that this community (Muslim) will regain its prestige and honour and I could not see its actual condition with my own eyes. Several days this thought haunted in my mind. Believe me that due to this I became old and my hair turned white."¹

Thus both the Wahhabi and Faraizi movements culminated in 1857 and left Muslim politics in the wilderness and it took several decades before Muslims recovered from the shock they had received.

1. The collection of Lectures, p. 4.

APPENDIX A

**POLITICAL LETTERS AND
SPEECHES OF
SAYYID AHMAD SHAHID**



APPENDIX A

Political Letters and Speeches of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid:

To the King of Bukhara

هرگاه بلاد اسلام در دست کفار لعام افتد بر جما میر اهل
اسلام عموماً و مشاهیر حکام خصوصاً واجب و موکد می گردد
که سعی و کوشش در مقابله و مقاتله آنها بجا آرند تا وقتی که
بلاد مسلمین را از قبضه ایشان بر آورند والا اثم و گناه گری می
شوند و عاصی و ستمگار از درگاه قبول مودود می گردند و از
ساخت قرب مطردند -

(a) "When the non-Muslims begin to dominate Islamic cities, the Muslims in general and the great rulers in particular ought to continue encountering and killing the infidels so long as the Islamic cities are not retrieved from their possession. Otherwise they will be committing sin and their deeds will not be recognized by the Providence. They will thus be deprived of the blessings of the proximity to God." ¹

نصاری نکوئیده خصال و مشرکین بد مال بر اکثر بلاد
هندوستان از لب دریائے اربابین تا ساحل دریائے شور که
تخمیناً شش ماه راه باشد تسلط یافتند و دام تشکیک و تردید
بناء به احوال دین رب خبیر بر یافتند و تمامی آن اقطار
به ظلمات ظلم و کفر مشحون گردانیدند -

(b) "The infidels have taken hold of Indian cities right from the Sindh river upto the Coast. The country is so vast that if one starts on foot, it will take six months to reach the tip. They (the infidels) have started spinning a web of

1. *Makātib Shah Ismail* p. 55 as quoted* by Mehr—*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 250 (Lahore).

scepticism and hypocrisy so as to do away with the religion of God. They have blurred all these regions with the mist of oppression and infidelity.”¹

کفار فرنگ که بر سر هندوستان تسلط یافته اند نهایت تجربه کار و هوشیار و حیلہ باز و مکار اند اگر بر اہل خراسان بپایند بہ سہولت تمام جمیع بلاد آنها را بہ دست آرند باز حکومت آنها بنوایت آنجناب (یعنی بخارا) متصل گردد و اطراف دارالحرب بہ اطراف دارالاسلام متحد شود۔

(c) “The Farangis who have taken possession over India are well experienced, shrewed, sham and hypocrites. If they attack the people of Khorasan (Afghanistan), they will easily capture their country. The borders of their territory will touch those of your kingdom. The sides of *Dar-ul-Harb* and *Dar-ul-Islam* will unite.”²

To The Ruler of Gazni and Kabul

مازمرہ مومنین ہندی در کفرستان ہندوستان بہ تنگ آمدہ بہ عزم جہاد و ہجرت از وطن گزیدہ ہرآنے دعوت مسلمین بناء بر اقامت آن دکن رکن جہت تائید ملت بیضاء حضرت سید المرسلین صلی اللہ علیہ وآلہ وسلم ابتداء لمرضات اللہ این قدر مسافت دور و دراز طے نہ دہہ در بلاد شما رسیدہ ہمیں طور منتہاے سر خود تا بہ دیار یوسف زئی کہ در حوالی پشاور است پیش نہاد خاطر ساختہ از ادا شہرہاے شما خواہیم رفت۔ لازمہ دانائی و سروت این کہ چیزے ترشح بہ خاطر نیارودہ اجازت نامہ قبل از رسیدن ما فرستند کہ بلاد سوسہ ازاں حدود بہ سمت مقصود بگزریم۔

1. *Maktab Shah Ismail* p. 55 as quoted by Mehr—*Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 250 (Lahore).

2. *Ibid*, pp. 255-56.

"We the Indian Muslims after having felt disgusted with infidelity of the people emigrated with a view to waging holy war. We invited the Muslims to the holy war and making them willing to support the enlightened followers of the Holy Prophet in compliance with the will of God have reached your cities after trudging long distances. The purpose is to reach Yusufzai which is in the vicinity of Peshawar. The courtesy and wisdom make it incumbent on us that we must not let any wrong instinct pass by our heart. The permit be accorded before our arrival so that we might set off toward our destination without hesitation." ¹

To Nawab Mohammad Wazir Khan

Saiyyid Ahmad had sent a letter to Nawab Wazir Khan the heir-apparent of Tonk on 25th April 1831, just eleven days before his martyrdom. This may be deemed to be the last of the letters addressed to India :

"I have arrived in the Pikhli hills. The denizens of this place are hospitable to me. They strongly promised to assist in the arrangement for holy war. They provided accomodation for us. So I am for the time being staying here in Balakot town with full inner concentration and tranquility. The infidels have pitched camp at a distance of three or four miles and are concentrating troops with the intention of launching an attack on us. Since this place i.e. Balakot is quite safe, thank God, the troops cannot reach here. Nevertheless, if our fighters take the initiative and come face to face with them, the war will break out. The war mongers have made up their mind to start fighting in a day or two. We hope that God the munificent will throw the gates of victory open upon us. If with the will and help of God we got the day in the battle the *Mujahid* will get hold from Jhelum river upto Kashmir. Let us pray day and night for the rise of Islam and victory of the fighters."²

1. Mehr—*Saiyyid Ahmad Shahid*, pp. 326-27.

2. *Ibid*, p. 378.

**To Sardar Sultan Mohammad Khan and
Sardar Sayyid Mohammad Khan**

"My motive behind accepting the leadership is nothing more than that of arraying forces for *jihad* or religious crusade on religious lines and maintaining discipline among the army of the Muslims. There are no other ulterior selfish motives for hoarding money, bringing cities and towns under sway, usurping kingdoms or humiliating rulers and the influential people, nor it includes in the least the enforcement of orders on the peoples of equal rank or excellence over contemporaries. I did never utter such words nor such an idea ever crossed my mind. To my mind the value of the crown of Faridoon and the throne of Alexander is tantamount to a grain of barley. The kingdoms of Kasra and Caesar are immaterial and insignificant in my eyes. I do, however, aspire to promulgate the orders of the Creator of the worlds called the Principles of Faith among the entire humanity of the world without any subversion. Thus I will practise ways and means useful in achieving this end." ¹

To Prince Kamran

"The country (Frontiers) after having been purged of the impurities of polytheism and the filth of dissonance will be handed over to those who are deserving and possess the genuine capabilities for handling administration, provided they are grateful to God for the boon and always ready to continue the holy war through fire and water. They will never stop the holy crusade and will never infringe the principles of Faith in dealing with the cases and dispensing justice. They will abstain from oppression and perversion. Then I will set out with my followers for India with a view to purifying the country from polytheism and infidelity. Because my real motive is to launch an attack over India and not to seek domicility in Khorasan (Frontiers and Afghanistan)." ²

1. As quoted by Nadvi—*Sirat-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, pp. 360-61.

2. *Ibid*, pp. 362-63.

To Shah Sulaiman

(a) "The underlying purpose for arraying the forces and leading encounters is nothing but to raise the words of Faith and resuscitate the acts of the Holy Prophet (be the blessings of God on him). The country of the Muslims be extricated from the possession of the infidels. There is no other motive than this and all."¹

قصارا از مدت چند سال حکومت و سلطنت این
ملک برپا شد و آن گردیده که نصاری و نهویدها خصال و مشرکین
بدستال بر اکثر بلاد هند استیلا یافتند و آن دیار را بظلمات
ظلم بیداد مشحون ساختند و در آن بلاد و امارت رسوم کفر و
شرک اشتهار یافتند - شعائر اسلام را رویه استغفار آورده -
ناگزیر سینه بی کینه بمعاینه این حال پر از دنج و ملال بود -
بشوق هجرت مالا مال - غیرت ایمانی بدل در جوش بود و
اقامت جهاد بسر خروش -

(b) "Unfortunately such a state of affairs is obtaining in India in the past few years that the Christians and infidels have come to dominate the major portion of the country and have started committing atrocities. The customs of profanity and polytheism have taken an upper hand while the manners of the Faith are thrown into oblivion. Such a state of affairs has brought great sorrow to us—desire of migration started lurking, the heart is blushing with shame and there is a passion for *jihad* or religious crusade."²

To the King of Hirat, Shah Muhammad

اقامت جهاد و ازاله بقی و فساد در هر زمان و هر
مکان از اهم احکام حضرت رب العباد است خصوصاً در این جزو
زمان که وقت شورش اهل کفر و طغیان به حد رسیده که

1. As quoted by Nadvi—*Sirat-Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, Part I, p. 374.

2. *Ibid*, p. 357.

تخریب شعائر دین و افساد حکومت سلاطین از دست کفره
متمرد دین و بغاوت به وقوع آمده و این فتنه عظیم تمام بلاد
هند و سند و خراسان را فرا گرفته - پس درین صورت تغافل
در مقدمه استیصال کفره متمردین و تساهل در باب سرزنش
باغیان مفسدین از اکبر معاصی و اقبیح آثام است - بناء
علیه این بنده درگاه حضرت اله از وطن مالوفه خود برخاسته
در دیار هند و سند و خراسان دور و سیر نموده و مومنین آن
اقطار و مسلمین آن دیار را به این معنی ترغیب کرد -

"To proclaim holy war and to avoid rebellion and riots everywhere and in every age, has always been the important Command of God. Specially in such circumstances when the activities of infidels have reached to such an extent that the Islamic principles are being distorted and the disturbances are being created in the Islamic kingdoms. This evil spectre has cast its shadows on India, Sindh and Khurasan. In this critical situation the avoidance of any effective measure to put an end to these evils, is the greatest sin. In order to checkmate this situation, humble servant of God (Sayyid Ahmad Shahid) came out of his native land and went on an extensive tour of Hind, Sindh and Khurasan and infused in these Muslims the spirit for *jihad*." ¹

To Ghulam Haider Khan

اکثر بلاد هندوستان بدست بیگانگان افتاده و ایشان
هرجا بنیاد و آئین جور و ظلم نهاده - ریاست روساء هندوستان
برپا داشته کسی تاب مقاومت ایشان نمی دارد - بلکه هرکس
ایشان را آقاه خود می شمارد و چون روساء کبار از مقابله
ایشان نشستند لاچار چند کس از ضعفاء بی مقدار کمربستند -

1, *Makatib Shah Ismail Shahid* (MS.) No. 37 as quoted by Mehr—
Jamal-i-Mujahidin, pp. 12-13.

"A large part of Indian territory have gone under the sway of the aliens and they have girdled their lions on injustice and high handedness. The reign of Indian rulers have come to an end. No one dares challenge them; everyone has acquiesced to regard them their master. Since great and eminent rulers have abandoned to challenge them, some humble and insignificant people have pledged to face their challenge." ¹

SPEECH AT PANJTAR

(a) The following is the speech delivered by him at Panjtar, on the frontier of Swat, near district Mardan, also a centre of his military activities, before a huge crowd in which many *ulemas* and other people were present :

"I tried to find out a place in India where I can possibly take all the Muslims and start religious crusade. In spite of the vastness of the country I could not find a suitable place for migration. Many people advised us to begin *jihad* in the country and also promised to give us help both in men and material. But I did not agree to it, because *jihad* is to be declared in conformity with the Islamic principles and it does not mean mere sporadic roiting. VILLAYATI brothers of your country were also present there and they said that their (part of the) country is best suited for the purpose and if we stay there lakhs of Muslims will participate in the struggle heart and soul, specially because Ranjit Singh has put the Muslims under the great pressure and hardships and is teasing them in different manners and dishonours them. With the advent of his army in the landscape mosques are destroyed, agriculture laid waste, property looted; women and children driven away and sold in Punjab. The Muslims are prevented even from saying *AZAN* and the mosques are used as *Stables* for horses. What is of cow slaughter even a hearsay results in the killing of man. Due to all these miseries and oppression I thought it proper to migrate from India to this very place. We intend with all Muslim unity and strength to declare *jihad* against the infidel to relieve

1. As quoted by Nadvi—*Sirat Sayyid Ahmad Shahid*, Part I, p. 358 (Lahore).

the Muslims from their cruel clutches.”¹

(b) Saiyyid Sahib addressed a Friday Congregation on 27th Ramadan at Sachchon and said :

“When the wall of a certain house collapses all the residents of the house are put into trouble. All the men, women and children get ready to repair it. One fetches mortar, other stores bricks and other builds the roof. Once the house gets fully repaired after incessant labour, the people reside there comfortably for long. Likewise the edifice of Islam has now grown ramshackle. The infidels like plunderers, have extended the hands of depredation over the property of the Muslims. They are fearless because the protectors and guardians of the houses are not to be seen anywhere. This must be an eye-opener for the negligent and careless that they must take care of their desolated home and hearth. They must make it safe quite anew. They must get the robbers and thieves arrested and put them in the prison. Once the house is arranged and the danger of depredation warded off they will lead a smooth and comfortable life undoubtedly.”²

1. As quoted by Nadvi—*Sirat-Saiyyid Ahmad Shahid*, Part 1, p. 379.

2. As quoted by Mehr—*Saiyyid Ahmad Shahid*, p. 352 (Lahore).

APPENDIX B

**THE WAHHABI LITERATURE
IN INDIA**

ARCHIVE

APPENDIX B

The Wahhabi Literature in India

In order to spread the Wahhabi ideology they used printing lithographic press. Hunter says, "even the briefest epitome of the Wahhabi treatises in prose and verse on the duty to wage war against the English would fill a volume."¹ Some of the more outstanding works may be mentioned here.

1. *Sirat-ul-Mustaqim*, or the Straight Path, is the collection of sayings of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid. It was originally written by Ismail Shahid, nephew of Shah Abdul Aziz. It was later on translated into Urdu by Maulvi Abdul Jabbar of Kanpur. According to Hunter it was regarded as the "Quran of the Wahhabis."
2. *Mansab-i-Imamat*, was written by Ismail Shahid. It deals with the nature of political leadership in Islam and rejects the idea of kingship. According to Hunter it was written to justify the Imamatus of Sayyid Ahmad Shahid.
3. *Qasida*, by Maulvi Karam Ali of Kanpur discussing the obligation of waging war against the infidels and the reward of all who take part in it.
4. *Sharh-i-Waqaya*, It deals with *jihad* and its religious significance.
5. A poem by Maulvi Ni'matullah, forecasting the downfall of the British power in India and the coming of a king from the West who shall deliver the Indian Muslims from the English. This *qasida* was prepared during this period and circulated as an earlier prophecy in order to inspire confidence amongst the people.

1. W. W. Hunter—*The Indian Muslims*, p. 66.

6. *Tarikh Kaiser Rum*, or *Misbah-us-Sare*. It is a history of Abdul Wahab of Nejd, his persecution and wars against the Turkish apostates.

7. *Asar-i-Mahshar*, or Signs of the Last Day, written by Maulvi Muhammad Ali in 1265 A. H., or 1849 A. D. This book was widely read during this period. It forecasts a war in the Khyber hills on the Punjab Frontier, where the English first will put an end to the Muslims. But the Muslims would find out this true *Imam*. A battle will ultimately take place for four days and the English will be completely wiped out, even the very smell of Government being driven out of their heads and brains'. At last *Imam Mahdi* will appear at the scene. Besides, the following works :

I. *Tazkir-ul-Akhyar* or Brotherly conversation by Ismail Shahid.

II. *Nasihah-ul-Muslimin*, or Advice to Muslims by Maulvi Kafam Ali of Kanpur.

III. *The Hidayat-ul-Muminin*, or Guide to the Faithful by Ahmad Husain.

IV. An Arabic '*Tanwir-ul-Ainain*, or Enlightening of the Eyes.

V. *Tanbih-ul-Ghafilin*, or Rebuke of the Negligent, in Urdu.

VI. *Chihah Hadis* or the Forty Traditions of Prophet Muhammad regarding Jihad or Holy War, also dealing with the religious obligations of waging war against the 'infidels' and exhorting the people to laydown their lives for this cause. Probably few movements in India have been propagated with greater system and zeal than the Wahhabi movement.

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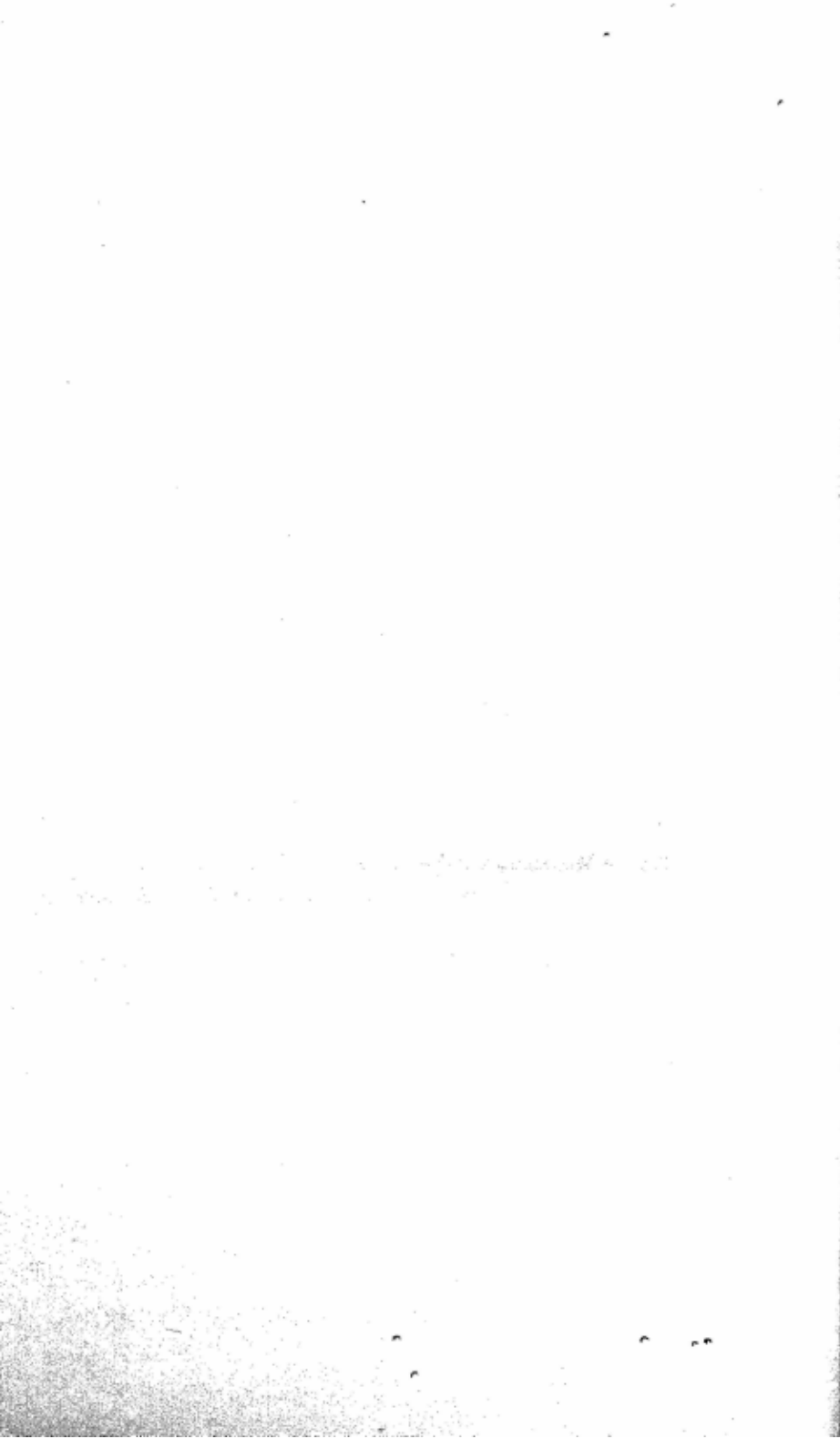
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